# Treatise for the Elderly[[1]](#footnote-1)

[This Flash consists of twenty-six hopes, lights, and solaces.]

REMINDER: The reason I have described my sorrows and afflictions at the beginning of each Hope in a truly grievous way that will sadden you is in order to show the extraordinary efficaciousness of the remedies proceeding from the All-Wise Qur’an. This Flash, concerning the elderly, has been unable to preserve its beauty of expression in three or four respects:

The First: It is about my life the events of which I revisited in my imagination; it was written in the state of mind of those times. It was not possible, therefore, to preserve an orderly arrangement in the way it is set out.

The Second: It was written at a time I felt extreme fatigue, after the morning prayers, and I was also compelled to write it at speed; its manner of expression therefore became confused.

The Third: There was not always someone with me to write, and the scribe who generally accompanied me had four or five other duties connected with the Risale-i Nur. We therefore could not find sufficient time to correct it and it remained in a disordered state.

The Fourth: We were both tired after its composition, and not thinking carefully of the meaning, made do with correcting it only superficially; so there are bound to be faults in the manner of expression. I request the generous elderly to look tolerantly on such errors and to include us in their prayers when they raise their hands to the divine court, since divine mercy does not reject the prayers of the blessed elderly.

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

Kaf. Ha. Ya. ‘Ain. Sad. \* [This is] a recital of the mercy of your Sustainer to His servant Zakariya. \* Behold! he cried to His Sustainer in secret, \* Praying: “O my Sustainer! Infirm indeed are my bones, and the hair of my head glistens with grey; but I am never unblest, O my Sustainer, in my prayer to you.” (19:1-4)

# FIRST HOPE

Respected elderly brothers and sisters who have reached maturity! Like you, I am elderly. I am going to write the ‘hopes’ I have found in my old age and some of the things that have befallen me, out of the desire to share with you the lights of consolation they contain. Of course the lights I have seen and the doors of hope I have encountered have been seen and opened in accordance with my defective and confused abilities. God willing, your pure, sincere dispositions will make those lights shine more brightly and strengthen the hopes I have found.

Thus, the spring, source and fount of the following hopes and lights is belief in God.

# SECOND HOPE

One day as I was entering upon old age, in the autumn at the time of the afternoon prayer, I was gazing on the world from a high mountain. Suddenly I was overwhelmed by a plaintive, sorrowful and in one respect dark state of mind. I saw that I had become old. The day too had grown old, and so had the year; so too had the world become old. As the time of departure from the world and separation from those I loved was drawing close within these instances of old age, my own old age shook me severely. Suddenly divine mercy unfolded in such a way that it transformed that plaintive sadness and separation into a powerful hope and shining light of solace. Yes, you who are elderly like myself! The All-Compassionate Creator presents himself to us in a hundred places in the All-Wise Qur’an as the Most Merciful of the Merciful, and always sends His mercy to the assistance of living creatures on the face of the earth who seek it, and every year fills the spring with innumerable bounties and gifts from the Unseen, sending them to us who are needy for sustenance, and manifests His mercy in greater abundance relatively to our weakness and impotence. For us in our old age, therefore, His mercy is our greatest hope and most powerful light. It may be obtained by forming a relation with the Most Merciful One through belief, and performing the five daily prayers, by being obedient to Him.

# THIRD HOPE

One time when I awoke in the morning of old age from the sleep of the night of youth I looked at myself and saw that my life was hastening towards the grave as though racing down a slope. As Niyazi Misri said:

Each day a stone from the building of my life falls to the ground; Heedless one! You slumber, unaware that the building is in ruins!

My body, my spirit’s dwelling, was becoming dilapidated with every day a stone of it falling away. My hopes and ambitions which bound me strongly to the world had begun to be broken off from it. I felt that the time I would be separated from my innumerable friends and those I loved was drawing near. I searched for a salve for that deep and apparently incurable spiritual wound, but I could not find one. Again like Niyazi Misri I said:

*While my heart desired its immortality, Reality required the passing of my body; I am afflicted with an incurable ill, which even Luqman could not cure![[2]](#footnote-2)*

Then suddenly the light and intercession of the Glorious Prophet (UWBP), the tongue, model, exemplar, herald, and representative of divine compassion, and the gift of guidance he brought to mankind, soothed and healed the wound I had supposed to be incurable and endless.

Yes, respected elderly men and women who feel their old age like I do! We are departing, there is no use in deceiving ourselves. Even if we close our eyes to it, we will not remain here. There is a mobilization. The land of the Intermediate Realm, which appears to us to be dark and full of separation due to the gloomy delusions which arise from heedlessness and in part from the people of misguidance, is the meeting-place of friends. It is the world where we shall meet with foremost God’s Beloved (Upon whom be blessings and peace), and with all our friends.

We are going to the world of the one who every year for one thousand three hundred and fifty years has been the ruler of one thousand three hundred and fift y million people, and the trainer of their spirits, the teacher of their minds, and the beloved of their hearts; to whose book of good works, in accordance with the meaning of *“the cause is like the doer,*” is every day added the equivalent of all the good works performed by his community; who is the means by which the elevated divine purposes in the universe are accomplished and the high value of beings are realized. When he came into the world, according to authentic narrations and accurate divining of reality, he exclaimed: *“My community! My community!”* So too at the Last Judgement when everyone thinks only of themselves, he will again declare: *“My community! My community!”*, and with sacred, elevated self-sacrifice hasten with his intercession to its assistance. We are going to such a world, illuminated by the stars of countless saints and purified scholars revolving around that Sun (UWBP).

Thus, the way to share in that Being’s (UWBP) intercession and profit from his light, and be saved from the darkness of the Intermediate Realm, is to follow his glorious practices.

# FOURTH HOPE

 At the time I approached old age, my physical health, which perpetuates heedlessness, was broken. Old age and illness attacked me in concert. Hitting me over the head, they chased away sleep. I had nothing to bind me to the world like family, children, and possessions. Having wasted the fruits of my life’s the capital on the giddiness of youth, I saw them to consist only of sins and mistakes. Crying out like Niyazi Misri, I said:

*I had concluded no trade; the capital of life was all lost;*

*I came to the road to find the caravan had moved on, unaware. Lamenting, I continued down the road, all alone, a stranger;*

*My eyes weeping, my heart in anguish, my mind bewildered, unaware.*

I was in exile at the time; I felt a despairing sorrow, a regretful penitence, a longing for assistance. Suddenly, the All-Wise Qur’an came to my aid. It opened a door of hope so powerful and afforded a light of consolation so true that it could have dispelled despair and darknesses a hundred times more intense than mine.

Yes, respected elderly men and women whose attachment to the world has begun to be sundered and the ties binding them to be broken! Is it possible that the All- Glorious Maker who creates this world as a perfectly ordered city or palace would not speak with his most important guests and friends or not meet with them? Since He knowingly made the palace and ordered and adorned it through His will and choice, certainly as one who makes knows, so one who knows will speak. Since He made this palace and city into a fine guesthouse and place of trade for us, He will surely have a book, a file, to explain His relations with us and what He desires from us.

The most holy of such Books is the Qur’an of Miraculous Exposition; it is a miracle in forty respects and is every instant on the tongues of at least a hundred million people; it scatters light, and every letter of it affords at least ten merits and rewards, and fruits of Paradise and lights in the Intermediate Realm, and sometimes ten thousand, and sometimes – through the mystery of the Night of Power – thirty thousand. There is no book in the universe to compete with it in this respect and no one could put one forward. Since this Qur’an which we have is the Word of the All-Glorious Creator of the heavens and earth, proceeding from His absolute dominicality, the tremendousness of His Godhead, and His all-encompassing mercy, and is His decree and a source of His mercy; adhere to it. In it are found a cure for every ill, a light for every darkness, and a hope for all despair. And the key to this eternal treasury is belief and submission to God, and listening to the Qur’an and accepting it, and reciting it.

# FIFTH HOPE

One time at the start of my old age when I desired solitude, I retired to Yuşa Tepesi, Mount Joshua, away up the Istanbul Bosphorus. My spirit was seeking ease in loneliness. One day on that high hill, I gazed around me at the broad horizon, and I cast a glance from the high position of the forty-fifth branch, that is, the forty-fifth year of the tree of my life to its lower levels. I saw that down on the lower branches of each year were the countless corpses of those I had known and had loved and with whom I had been connected. I felt a truly piteous sorrow at their parting and separation, I wept like Fuzuli Baghdadi for the friends from whom I was parted:

*As I recall their company I weep,*

*So long as there is breath in this dry body, I cry out.*

I sought a solace, a light, a door leading to hope. Suddenly belief in the hereafter came to my assistance, shedding an inextinguishable light, offering an indestructible hope.

Yes, my brothers and sisters who are elderly like me! Since the hereafter exists and it is everlasting, and it is a better world than this; and since the One who created us is both All-Wise and All-Compassionate; we should not complain and regret our old age. On the contrary, we should be happy at it in so far as with age one reaches perfect maturity through worship and belief, and it is a sign one will be released from the duties of life and depart for the world of mercy in order to rest.

According to narrations, some relying on witnessing and some on ‘absolute certainty’, mankind’s most eminent individuals, the one hundred and twenty-four thousand prophets,[[3]](#footnote-3) have unanimously given news of the existence of the hereafter, and that men will be sent there and the universe’s Creator will bring it about in accordance with His certain promise. Similarly, affirming through illumination and witnessing in the form of ‘certainty at the degree of knowledge’ the reports of the prophets, the one hundred and twenty-four million saints have testified to the hereafter’s existence. And through the manifestations they display in this world, all the names of the universe’s All-Wise Maker self-evidently necessitate an everlasting realm. So too the infinite pre-eternal power and the boundless eternal wisdom which allowing nothing to be vain and purposeless ever y year in the spring, raise to life with the command of *“‘Be!’ and it is”* (36:83, etc.) the incalculable corpses of the dead trees on the face of the earth, making them manifest life after death, and revivify three hundred thousand species of plants and animals as thousands of samples of the resurrection of the dead. These observedly necessitate the existence of the hereafter, as does the eternal mercy and perpetual favor which with perfect compassion and in wondrous fashion provide the livelihoods of all living beings needy for sustenance and in a brief time in spring display their uncountable sorts of adornment and decoration; they too necessitate the existence of the hereafter. Together with man, the most perfect fruit of the universe and its Creator’s most loved creature, who of all beings is the most closely concerned with the beings in the universe, and the clear indications and certain evidence of his intense, unshakeable, constant desire for immortality and his hopes which extend to eternity – all these prove so decisively that after this transient world there will be an eternal world, a realm of the hereafter and everlasting happiness that they self-evidently necessitate acceptance of the hereafter’s existence.[[4]](#footnote-4)

Since the most important thing the All-Wise Qur’an teaches us is belief in the hereafter, and since this belief is thus powerful and it yields such hope and solace that if a person was overwhelmed by old age a hundred thousand times over, the consolation arising from this belief would be sufficient to face it; for sure we elderly people should love our old age and say: “All praise be to God for perfect belief!”

# SIXTH HOPE

 One time during my distressing captivity, I was alone on the top of the Pine Mountain, in the mountains of Barla, having withdrawn from the company of men. I was searching for a light in my loneliness. One night on the small platform at the top of a tall pine-tree on the summit of that high mountain, old age recalled to me three or four exiles, one within the other. As is described in the Sixth Letter, the melancholy sound of the rustling, murmuring trees on that lonely, silent, distant night affected me grievously in my old age and exile. Old age gave me the following thought: like the day changed into this black grave and the world donned its black shroud, the daytime of your life, too, will turn into night, and the daytime of the world turn into the night of the Intermediate Realm, and summertime of life will be transformed into the winter nighttime of death. It whispered this in my heart’s ear. My soul was then obliged to say:

Yes, I am far from my native land, but being separated from all those I have loved during my fifty years’ lifetime who have died, and remaining weeping for them, is a far more grievous and sorrowful exile than the exile from my country. Moreover, I am drawing close to a much sadder and more painful exile than the melancholy exile of the night and the mountain: old age informs me that I am approaching the time of separation from the world. I then sought a light, a hope from these sorrowful exiles one within the other. Suddenly belief in God came to my assistance and afforded such a familiarity that even if the compounded desolation in which I found myself increased a thousand fold, its consolation would have been sufficient.

Elderly men and women! Since we have a Compassionate Creator, there can be no exile for us! Since He exists, everything exists for us. Since He exists, the angels exist. The world is not empty. Lonely mountains and empty deserts are full of Almighty God’s servants. Apart from His conscious servants, stones and trees become like familiar friends when seen through His light and on His account. They may converse with us and give us enjoyment.

Yes, evidences and witnesses to the number of beings in the universe and to the number of the letters of this vast book of the world testify to the existence of our All- Compassionate, Munificent, Intimate, Loving Creator, Maker, and Protector; they show us His mercy to the number of living creatures’ members, foods, and bounties, which may be a means of receiving His compassion, mercy, and favor, and indicate His court. Impotence and weakness are the most acceptable intercessor at His court. And old age is precisely the time of impotence and weakness. So one should not feel resentful at old age, which is thus an acceptable intercessor at a court, but love it.

# SEVENTH HOPE

One time at the start of my old age when the laughter of the Old Said was being transformed into the weeping of the New Said, supposing me still to be the Old Said, the worldly in Ankara invited me there, and I went. At the close of autumn I climbed to the top of the citadel, which was far more aged, dilapidated, and worn out than me. It seemed to me to be formed of petrified historical events. The old age of the season of the year together with my old age, the citadel’s old age, mankind’s old age, the old age of the glorious Ottoman Empire, and the death of the Caliphate’s rule, and the world’s old age all caused me to look in a most grieved, piteous and melancholy state in that lofty citadel at the valleys of the past and the mountains of the future. As I experienced an utterly black state of mind in Ankara encompassed by four or five layers of the darknesses of old age one within the other, I sought a light, a solace, a hope.

As I sought consolation looking to the right, that is, to the past, my father and forefathers and the human race appeared in the form of a vast grave and filled me with gloom rather than consoling me. Seeking a remedy I looked to the future, which was to my left. I saw that it appeared as a huge, dark grave for myself, my contemporaries, and future generations; it produced horror in place of familiarity. Feeling desolate in the face of the left and right, I looked at the present day. It appeared to my heedless, historical eye as a coffin bearing my half-dead, suffering and desperately struggling corpse. So despairing of that direction too, I raised my head and looked at the top of the tree of my life, and there was my corpse; it stood at the top of the tree and was watching me. Feeling horror at this direction, too, I bowed my head. I looked to the foot of the tree of my life, to its roots, and saw that the soil there, the earth which was the source of my creation and the dust of my bones mixed together, was being trampled underfoot. That was no remedy, it only added further pain to my affliction.

Then I was forced to look behind me. I saw that this unstable, transient world was tumbling, disappearing, into the valleys of nothingness and the darkness of non-existence. I was seeking a salve for my pain, but it only added poison. Since I could see no good in that direction I looked in front of me, I sent my view forward to the future. I saw that the door of the grave was open right in the middle of my path; it was watching me with its mouth agape. The highway beyond it which stretched away to eternity, and the convoys travelling that highway, struck the eye from the distance. But apart from a limited will as my support and defensive weapon in the face of the horrors coming from these six directions, I had nothing.

The faculty of will, man’s only weapon against those innumerable enemies and endless harmful things, is both defective, and short, and weak, and lacks the power to create, so he is capable of nothing apart from ‘acquisition.’ It could neither pass to the past in order to silence the sorrows which came to me from there, nor could it penetrate the future to prevent the fears which arose from there. I saw that it was of no benefit for my hopes and pains concerning the past and future.

As I was struggling in the horror, desolation, darkness and despair proceeding from these six directions, the lights of belief which shine in the sky of the Qur’an of Miraculous Exposition suddenly came to my assistance. They lit up and illuminated those six directions to such a degree that if the terrors and darkness I had seen increased a hundredfold, the light would still have been sufficient to meet them. One by one it transformed all those horrors into solace and the desolation into familiarity. It was as follows:

Belief rent asunder the desolate view of the past as a vast grave, and showed it with utter certainty to be a familiar, enlightened gathering of friends.

And belief showed the future, which had appeared in the form of a huge grave to my heedless eyes, to be most certainly a banquet of the Most Merciful One in delightful palaces of bliss.

And belief rent the view of present time as a coffin, as it had appeared to my heedless view, and showed it with certainty to be a place of trade for the hereafter and a glittering guesthouse of the All-Merciful One.

And belief showed with utter certainty that the only fruit at the top of the tree of life was not a corpse as had appeared to my neglectful eye, but that my spirit, which would manifest eternal life and was designated for eternal happiness, would leave its worn-out home to travel around the stars.

And through its mystery, belief showed that my bones and the earth that was the source of my creation were not valueless pulverized bones trampled underfoot, but that the earth was the door to divine mercy and veil before the halls of Paradise.

And through the mystery of the Qur’an, belief showed that the world which had appeared to my heedless eye as tumbling behind me into nothingness and non-existence to consist of missives of the Eternally Besought One and pages of decorations and embroideries glorifying God which had completed their duties, stated their meanings, and left their results in existence in their place. It made known with complete certainty the true nature of the world.

And through the light of the Qur’an, belief showed that the grave which would open its eyes and look at me in the future was not the mouth of a well, but that it was the door to the world of light, and that the highway which stretched to eternity beyond it led not to nothingness and non-existence, but to existence, a realm of light, and eternal bliss. Since belief demonstrated this to a degree which afforded utter conviction, it was both a remedy and a salve for my afflictions.

And in place of a very minor ability to receive, belief puts a document into the hand of the limited faculty of will through which it may rely on an infinite power and be connected to a boundless mercy in the face of those innumerable enemies and layers of darkness. Indeed, belief is a document in the hand of man’s will, and although this human weapon of will is in itself both short, powerless, and deficient, just as when a soldier utilizes his partial strength on account of the state, he performs duties far exceeding his own strength, so too through the mystery of belief, if the limited faculty of will is used in the name of Almighty God and in His way, it may gain also a paradise as broad as five hundred years.

And belief takes from the hands of the body the reins of the faculty of will, which cannot penetrate to the past and future, and hands them over to the heart and spirit. Since the sphere of their life is not restricted to present time like the body, and included within it are a great many years from the past and a great many years from the future, the will ceases being limited and acquires universality. Through the strength of belief it may enter the deepest valleys of the past and repel the darkness of its sorrows; so too with the light of belief it may rise as far as the farthest mountains of the future, and remove its fears.

My elderly brothers and sisters who are suffering the difficulties of old age like myself! Since, praise be to God, we are believers, and in belief are found this many luminous, pleasurable, agreeable, and gratifying treasures; and since our old age impels us even more to the contents of the treasure, for sure, rather than complaining about old age accompanied by belief, we should offer endless thanks.

# EIGHTH HOPE

At a time grey hairs, the sign of old age, were appearing in my hair, the turmoil of the First World War, which made even heavier the deep sleep of youth, the upheaval of my captivity as a prisoner-of-war, the position of great fame and honor accorded to me on my return to Istanbul, and the kind treatment and attention far exceeding my due I received from everyone, from the Caliph, even, Shaykh al-Islam, and Commander-in-Chief of the Army to the students of religion, the intoxication of youth, and the mental state produced by my position all made the sleep of youth so heavy that I quite simply saw the world as permanent and myself in a wonderful undying situation cemented to it.

Then one day in Ramadan I went to Bayezid Mosque to listen to the sincere Qur’an reciters. With their tongues, the Qur’an of Miraculous Exposition was proclaiming with its exalted heavenly address the decree of:

Every living creature shall taste death, (3:185, etc.)

which powerfully gives news of man’s death and that of all animate creatures. It entered my ear, penetrated to the depths of my heart and established itself there; it shattered my profound sleep and heedlessness. I went out of the mosque. Because of the stupor of the sleep which for a long time had settled in my head, for several days a tempest raged in it, and I saw myself as a boat with smoking boilers and compass spinning. Every time I looked at my hair in the mirror, the grey hairs told me: *“Take note of us!”* And so the situation became clear through the warnings of my grey hairs.

I looked and saw that my youth which so captivated me with its pleasures and in which I so trusted was bidding me farewell, and that this worldly life which I so loved and with which I was so involved was beginning to be extinguished, and that the world with which I was closely connected and of which I was quite simply the lover was saying to me: *“Have a good journey!”*, and was warning me that I would be leaving this guesthouse. It too was saying *“Good-bye,”* and was preparing to depart. The following meaning was unfolding in my heart from the indications of the Qur’an of Miraculous Exposition’s verse,

Every living creature shall taste death:

the human race is a living creature; it shall die in order to be resurrected. The globe of the earth is a living creature; it also will die in order to take on an eternal form. The world too is a living creature; it will die in order to assume the form of the hereafter.

While in this state, I considered my situation. I saw that youth, which is the source of pleasure, was departing; while old age, the source of sorrow, was approaching; that life, which is so shining and luminous, was taking its leave; while death, which is terrifying and apparently darkness, was preparing to arrive; and that the lovable world, which is thought to be permanent and is the beloved of the heedless, was hastening to its decease.

In order to deceive myself and again plunge my head into heedlessness I considered the pleasures of the social standing I enjoyed in Istanbul, which was far higher than I deserved, but there was no advantage in it at all. All the regard, attention, and consolation of people could only accompany me as far as the looming door of the grave; there it would be extinguished. Since I saw it to be a tedious hypocrisy, cold conceit, and temporary stupefaction under the embellished veil of glory and renown, which is the illusory aim of those who chase fame, I understood that these things which had until then deceived me could provide me with no solace, there was no light to be found in them at all.

I again started to listen to the reciters in Bayezid Mosque in order to hear the Qur’an’s heavenly teaching, and to awaken once more. From its sublime instruction I heard good news through sacred decrees of the sort, And give glad tidings to those who believe. (2:25, etc.)

With its effulgence, I sought consolation, hope, and light, within the points at which I had felt horror, desolation and despair, not outside them. Endless thanks be to Almighty God, I found the cure within the malady itself, I found the light within the darkness itself, I found the solace within the horror itself.

Firstly, I looked in the face of death, which is imagined to be most terrible and terrifies everyone. Through the light of the Qur’an I saw that although its veil is black, dark, and ugly, for believers its true face is luminous and beautiful. We have proved this truth decisively in many parts of the Risale-i Nur. For example, as we explained in the Eighth Word and the Twentieth Letter, death is not annihilation and separation, but the introduction to eternal life, its beginning. It is a rest from the hardships of life’s duties, a demobilization. It is a change of residence. It is to meet with the caravan of one’s friends who have already migrated to the Intermediate World; and so on. I saw death’s true, beautiful face through truths like these. I looked at death’s face not with fear, but with a sort of longing. I understood one meaning of the Sufis’ contemplation of death.

Then I considered my departed youth – youth, which makes everyone weep on its passing, which infatuates them and fills them with desire, causing them to pass it in sin and heedlessness. I saw that within its beautiful embroidered garb was an ugly, drunken, stupified face. Had I not learnt its true nature, it would have made me weep for a hundred years if I remained in the world that long, instead of intoxicating and amusing me for a few years. Just as one such person said lamenting:

*“If only one day my youth would return, I would tell it of the woes old age has brought me.”*

Indeed, elderly people like the above who do not know the true nature of youth, think of their own youth, and weep with regret and longing. But when youth belongs to believers with sound minds and hearts, it is a most powerful, agreeable and pleasant means of securing good works and trade for the hereafter, so long as they spend it on worship, and that trade and those good works. For those who know their religious duties and do not misspend their youth, it is a precious and delightful divine bounty. But when it is not spent in moderation, uprightness, and fear of God, it contains many dangers; it damages eternal happiness and the life of this world. In return for the pleasures of one or two years’ youth, in old age it causes many years of grief and sorrow.

Since for most people youth is harmful, we elderly people should thank God that we have been saved from its dangers and harm. Like everything else, the pleasures of youth depart. If they have been spent on worship and good works, the fruits of such a youth remain perpetually in their place and are the means of gaining youth in eternal life.

Next, I considered the world, with which most people are infatuated and to which they are addicted. Through the light of the Qur’an, I saw that it has three faces, one within the other:

The First looks to the divine names; it is a mirror to them

Its Second Face looks to the hereafter, and is its tillage.

Its Third Face looks to the worldly; it is the playground of the heedless. Moreover, everyone has his own vast world within this world. Simply, there are worlds one within the other to the number of human beings. The pillar of each person’s private world is his own life. If his body gives way, his world collapses on his head, it is doomsday for him. Since the heedless and neglectful do not realize that their world will be so quickly destroyed, they suppose it to be permanent like the general world and worship it. I thought to myself: *“I too have a private world that will swiftly collapse and be demolished like the worlds of other people. What value is there in this private world, this brief life of mine?”*

Then, through the light of the Qur’an, I saw that both for myself and everyone else, this world is a temporary place of trade, a guesthouse which is every day filled and emptied, a market set up on the road for the passers-by to shop in, an ever-renewed notebook of the Pre-Eternal Inscriber which is constantly written and erased, and every spring is a gilded letter, and every summer a well-composed ode; that it is formed of mirrors reflecting and renewing the manifestations of the All-Glorious Maker’s names; is a seed-bed of the hereafter, a flower-bed of divine mercy, and a special, temporary workshop for producing signboards which will be displayed in the world of eternity.

I offered a hundred thousand thanks to the All-Glorious Creator who had made the world in this way. And I understood that while love for the beautiful, inner faces of the world which look to the hereafter and divine names had been given to mankind, since they spent it on its transient, ugly, harmful, heedless face, they manifested the meaning of the Hadith: *“Love of this world is the chief of all errors.”[[5]](#footnote-5)*

Elderly people! I realized this truth through the light of the All-Wise Qur’an, and the warnings of my old age, and belief opening my eyes. And I have demonstrated it with decisive proofs in many places in the Risale-i Nur. I experienced a true solace, powerful hope, and shining light. I was thankful for my old age, and I was happy that my youth had gone. You too do not weep, but offer thanks. Since there is belief and the truth is thus, it should be the heedless who weep and the misguided who lament.

# NINTH HOPE

 In the First World War, as a prisoner, I was in the distant province of Kosturma in north-eastern Russia. There was a small mosque belonging to the Tatars beside the famous River Volga. I used to become wearied among my friends, the other officers. I craved solitude, yet I could not wander about outside without permission. Then they took me on bail to the Tatar quarter, to that small mosque on the banks of the Volga. I used to sleep there, alone. Spring was close. I used to be very wakeful during the long, long nights of that northern land; the sad plashing of the Volga and the mirthless patter of the rain and the melancholy sighing of the wind of those dark nights in that dark exile had temporarily roused me from a deep sleep of heedlessness. I did not yet consider myself old, but those who had experienced the Great War were old. For those were days that, as though manifesting the verse:

A day that will turn the hair of children grey, (73:17)

 made even children old. While I was forty years old, I felt myself to be eighty. In those long, dark nights and sorrowful exile and melancholic state, I despaired of life and of my homeland. I looked at my powerlessness and aloneness, and my hope failed.

Then, while in that state, succor arrived from the All-Wise Qur’an; my tongue said:

God is enough for us; and how excellent a guardian is He. (3:173)

And weeping, my heart cried out: *“I am a stranger, I am alone, I am weak, I am powerless: I seek mercy, I seek forgiveness, I seek help from You, O my God!”*

And, thinking of my old friends in my homeland, and imagining myself dying in exile there, like Niyazi Misri, my spirit poured forth these lines:

*Fleeing the world’s grief,*

*Taking flight with ardour and longing, Opening my wings to the void,*

*Crying with each breath, Friend! Friend!*

*It was searching for its friends.*

Anyway, my weakness and impotence became such potent intercessors and means at the divine court on that melancholy, pitiful, separation-afflicted, long night in exile that now I still wonder at it. For several days later I escaped in the most unexpected manner, on my own, not knowing Russian, across a distance that would have taken a year on foot. I was saved in a wondrous fashion through divine favor, which was bestowed as a consequence of my weakness and impotence. Then, passing through Warsaw and Austria, I reached Istanbul, so that to be saved in this way so easily was quite extraordinary. I completed the long flight with an ease and facility that even the boldest and most cunning Russian-speakers could not have accomplished.

That night in the mosque on the banks of the Volga made me decide to pass the rest of my life in caves. Enough now of mixing in this social life of people. Since finally I would enter the grave alone, I said that from now on I would chose solitude in order to become accustomed to it. But regretfully, things of no consequence like my many and serious friends in Istanbul, and the glittering worldly life there, and in particular the fame and honor accorded me, which were far greater than my due, made me temporarily forget my decision. It was as though that night in exile was a luminous blackness in my life’s eye, and the glittering white daytime of Istanbul, a lightless white in it. It could not see ahead, it still slumbered. Until two years later, Ghawth al-Geylani opened my eyes once more with his book Futuh al-Ghayb.

O elderly men and women! Know that the weakness and powerless of old age are means for attracting divine grace and mercy. The manifestation of mercy on the face of the earth demonstrates this truth in the clearest fashion, just as I have observed it in myself on numerous occasions. For the weakest and most powerless of animals are the young. But then it is they who receive the sweetest and most beautiful manifestation of mercy. The powerlessness of a young bird in the nest at the top of a tree attracts the manifestation of mercy to employ its mother like an obedient soldier. Its mother flies all around and brings it its food. When with its wings growing strong the nestling forgets its impotence, its mother tells it to go and find its own food, and no longer listens to it.

Just as this mystery of mercy is in force for the young, so is it in force for the elderly, who resemble young in regard to weakness and impotence. I have had experiences which have led me to form the unshakeable conviction that just as the sustenance of infants is sent to them in wondrous fashion by divine mercy on account of their impotence, being made to flow forth from the springs of breasts; so too the sustenance of believing elderly, who acquire innocence, is sent in the form of plenty. This truth is also proved by the Hadith which says: *“If it were not for your elderly folk with their bent backs, calamities would have descended on you in floods.”[[6]](#footnote-6)* It states both that a household’s source of plenty is its elderly inhabitants, and that it is the elderly that preserve the household from the visitation of calamities.

Since the weakness and impotence of old age are thus the means of attracting divine mercy to this extent; and since with its verses:

Whether one or both of them attain old age in your life, say not to them a word of contempt, nor repel them, but address them in terms of honor. \* And out of kindness, lower the wing of humility, and say: *“My Sustainer! Bestow on them Your mercy even as they cherished me in childhood,”* (17:23-4)

the All-Wise Qur’an summons children most miraculously in five ways to be kind and respectful towards their elderly parents; and since the religion of Islam commands respect and compassion towards the elderly; and since human nature also requires respect and compassion towards the aged; we elderly people certainly receive significant, constant mercy and respect from divine grace and human feeling in place of the fleeting physical pleasures and appetites of youth, as well as the spiritual pleasures arising from respect and compassion. Since this is the case, we would not exchange this old age of ours for a hundred youths. Yes, I can tell you certainly that even if they were to give me ten years of the Old Said’s youth, I would not give one year of the New Said’s old age. I am content with my old age, and you too should be content with yours!

# TENTH HOPE

For a year or two in Istanbul after returning from being held as a prisoner-of-war, I was overcome by heedlessness. The politics of the day directed my attention away from myself and scattered it on the outside world. Then one day I was sitting on a high spot overlooking the valley of the Eyüb Sultan graveyard in Istanbul when I was overcome by a state of mind in which, while I was looking down on it, it seemed my private world was dying and my spirit was withdrawing. I said: *“I wonder if it’s the inscriptions on the gravestones that are giving me such illusions?”*, and I drew back my gaze. I looked not at the distance, but at the graveyard. Then the following was imparted to my heart: *“This graveyard around you holds Istanbul a hundred times over, for Istanbul has been emptied here a hundred times. You cannot escape from the command of the All-Wise and Powerful One who has poured all the people of Istanbul into here; you are no exception; you too will depart.”*

I left the graveyard and with those awesome thoughts entered a small cell in Sultan Eyüb Mosque where I had stayed many times before. I thought to myself, I am a guest in three respects: I am a guest in this tiny room, I am also a guest in Istanbul, and a guest in this world. A guest has to think of the road. Just as I shall leave this room, so one day I shall leave Istanbul, and yet another day I shall depart from this world.

While in this state of mind, I, my heart, was overwhelmed by a most pitiful, grievous sorrow. I was not losing only one or two friends; I would be parted from the thousands of people I loved in Istanbul, and I would also part from Istanbul, which I also loved much. And just as I would be parted from hundreds of thousands of friends in this world, so I would leave the beautiful world, with which I was captivated and I loved. While pondering over this, I climbed once more to that spot in the graveyard. I had been to the cinema from time to time to take lessons, and just then all the dead of Istanbul appeared to me to be walking around, like the cinema shows in the present the images of the past. And all the people I could see at that time appeared to be corpses walking around. My imagination told me: some of the dead in the graveyard appear to be walking around as though on the cinema-screen, so you should see the people of the present, who are bound to enter the graveyard in the future, as having entered it; they too are corpses, walking around.

Suddenly through the light of the Qur’an and through the guidance of Ghawth al- A‘zam, Shaykh Geylani, my grievous state was transformed into a joyful one. It was like this:

The light proceeding from the Qur’an gave me the following thought: you had one or two officer friends while a prisoner-of-war in exile in Kosturma in the north- east. You knew that they would in any event go to Istanbul. If one of them had asked you: “Do you want to go to Istanbul, or to stay here?” For sure if you had had a jot of intelligence, you would joyfully have chosen to go to Istanbul. For out of a thousand and one friends, nine hundred and ninety-nine were already in Istanbul. Only one or two remained there, and they too would leave. Going to Istanbul for you would not be a sad departure and sorrowful separation. Moreover you have come here and were you not happy to do so? You were delivered from the long, dark nights and cold, stormy winters in that enemy country. You came to Istanbul, a worldly paradise.

In just the same way, from your childhood to your present age, ninety-nine out of a hundred of those you love have migrated to the graveyard, which terrifies you. You have one or two friends still in this world, and they too will depart. Your death in this world is not separation; it is union; it is to be reunited with all those friends. I was reminded that they, that is those immortal spirits, have left behind under the earth their worn-out dwellings, and some of them are travelling about the stars and some in the levels of the Intermediate Realm.

Yes, the Qur’an and belief proved this truth so certainly that you should believe it as though seeing it if you are not entirely lacking heart and spirit, and misguidance has not suffocated your heart. For most certainly and self-evidently the All-Generous Maker who adorns this world with innumerable sorts of gifts and bounties, and demonstrates His dominicality munificently and compassionately, and preserves even the least significant things like seeds, would not annihilate or send to nothingness or waste man as unkindly and purposelessly as it superficially appears, for he is the most perfect, comprehensive, important, and beloved among His creatures. Rather, like the seeds a farmer scatters on the earth, the Compassionate Creator temporarily casts that beloved creature of His under the ground, which is a door of mercy, in order to produce shoots in another life.

After receiving this reminder of the Qur’an, the graveyard became more familiar to me than Istanbul. Solitude and retirement became more pleasurable to me than conversation and company, and I found a place of seclusion for myself in Sariyer on the Bosporus. There, Ghawth al-A‘zam (May God be pleased with him) became a master, doctor, and guide for me with his Futuh al-Ghayb, while Imam Rabbani (May God be pleased with him) became a companion, sympathetic friend, and teacher with his Maktubat (Letters). Then I was extremely happy I had approached old age, withdrawn from civilization, and slipped free of social life. I thanked God.

O respected persons who have entered upon old age and who frequently recall death through its warnings! In accordance with the light of the teachings of belief taught by the Qur’an, we should look favorably on old age, death, and illness, and even love them in one respect. Since we have an infinitely precious bounty like belief, old age, and illness, and death are all agreeable. If there are things that are disagreeable, they are sin, vice, innovations, and misguidance.

# ELEVENTH HOPE

 After my return from captivity, I was living together with my nephew Abdurrahman[[7]](#footnote-7) in a villa on the hill at Çamlıca in Istanbul. From the point of view of worldly life, my situation could have been thought to be the most fortunate for people like us. For I had been saved from being a prisoner-of-war and in the Darü’l-Hikmet we were being successful in propagating knowledge in an elevated way suitably to my profession, the learned profession. The honor and esteem afforded me were far greater than my due. I was living in Çamlıca, the most beautiful place in Istanbul. Everything was perfect for me. I was together with the late Abdurrahman, my nephew, who was extremely intelligent and self-sacrificing, and was both my student, and servant, and scribe, and spiritual son. But then, knowing myself to be more fortunate than anyone else in the world, I looked in the mirror and I saw grey hairs in my hair and beard. Suddenly, the spiritual awakening I had experienced in the mosque in Kosturma while in captivity recommenced. I began to study the circumstances and causes to which I felt geniune attachment and which I supposed were the source of happiness in this world. But whichever of them I studied, I saw that it was rotten; it was not worth the attachment; it was deceptive. Around that time, I suffered an unexpected and unimaginable act of disloyalty and unfaithfulness at the hands of a friend whom I had supposed to be most loyal. I felt disgust at the world. I said to myself: *“Have I been altogether deceived? I see that many people look with envy at our situation, which in reality should be pitied. Are all these people crazy, or is it me that has gone crazy so that I see all these worldly people as such?”*

Anyway, as a result of this severe awakening caused me by old age, first of all I saw the transitoriness of all the ephemeral things to which I was attached. Then I looked at myself, and I saw myself to be utterly impotent. So then my spirit declared, which desires immortality and was infatuated with ephemeral beings imagining them to be immortal: *“Since I am a transient being with regard to my body, what good can come of these ephemeral things? Since I am powerless, what can I await from these powerless things? What I need is one who is Eternal and Enduring, one who is Pre- Eternal and All-Powerful, who will provide a remedy for my ills.”* And I began to search.

Then, before everything, I had recourse to the learning I had studied of old, I began to search for a consolation, a hope. But unfortunately, up to that time I had filled my mind with the sciences of philosophy as well as the Islamic sciences, and quite in error had imagined those philosophical sciences to be the source of progress and means of illumination. However, those philosophical matters had greatly dirtied my spirit and been an obstacle to my spiritual development. Suddenly, through Almighty God’s mercy and munificence, the sacred wisdom of the All-Wise Qur’an came to my assistance. As is explained in many parts of the Risale-i Nur, it washed away and cleansed the dirt of those philosophical matters.

For instance, the spiritual darknesses arising from science and philosophy plunged my spirit into the universe. Whichever way I looked seeking a light, I could find not a gleam in those matters, I could not breathe. And so it continued until the instruction in divine unity given by the phrase from the All-Wise Qur’an *“There is no god but He”* dispersed all those layers of darkness with its brilliant light, and I could breathe with ease. But relying on what they had learnt from the people of misguidance and philosophers, my soul and Satan attacked my reason and my heart. All thanks be to God, the ensuing debate with my soul resulted in the victory of my heart. Those exchanges have been described in part in many parts of the Risale-i Nur. So deeming them to be sufficient, here I shall explain only one proof out of thousands in order to show one thousandth part of that victory of the heart. In this way it may also cleanse the spirits of certain elderly people which have been dirtied in their youth, and their hearts sickened and souls spoilt, by matters which though called Western philosophy or the sciences of civilization, are in part misguidance and in part trivia. And through divine unity, they may be saved from evil of Satan and the soul. It is as follows:

My soul said in the name of science and philosophy: *“According to the nature of things, the beings in the universe intervene in other beings. Everything looks to a cause. The fruit has to be sought from the tree and seed from the soil. So what does it mean to seek the tiniest and least insignificant thing from God and to beseech Him for it?”*

Through the light of the Qur’an, the meaning of divine unity then unfolded in the following way: like the greatest thing, the tiniest and most particular proceeds directly from the power of the Creator of the whole universe and emerges from His treasury. It cannot occur in any other way. As for causes, they are merely a veil. For in regard to art and creation, sometimes the creatures we supposed to be the smallest and least important are greater than the largest creatures. Even if a fly is not of greater art than a chicken, it is not of lesser art. In which case, no difference should be made between great and small. Either all should be divided between material causes, or all should be attributed at once to a single Being. And just as the former is impossible, the latter is necessary and imperative.

For if beings are attributed to a single Being, that is to a Pre-Eternal All-Powerful One, since His knowledge, the existence of which is certain by reason of the order and wisdom in all beings, encompasses everything; and since the measure of all things is determined in His knowledge; and since observedly beings which are infinitely full of art continuously come into existence from nothing with infinite ease; and since in accordance with innumerable powerful evidences that All-Knowing All-Powerful One is able to create anything whatever through the command of “‘Be!’ and it is” as simply as striking a match, and as is explained in many parts of the Risale-i Nur and proved particularly in the Twentieth Letter and at the end of the Twenty-Third Flash, He possesses unlimited power – since this is the case, the extraordinary ease and facility which we observe arises from that all-encompassing knowledge and vast power.

For example, if a special solution is applied to a book written in invisible ink, that huge book suddenly demonstrates its existence visibly and makes itself read. In just the same way, the particular form and appointed measure of everything is determined in the all-encompassing knowledge of the Pre-Eternal All-Powerful One. Through the command of *“‘Be!’ and it is”* and with that limitless power of His and penetrating will, like spreading the solution on the writing, the Absolutely All-Powerful One applies a manifestation of His power to the being which exists as knowledge and with utter ease and facility gives it external existence; He displays and makes read the embroideries of His wisdom.

If all things are not all together attributed to that Pre-Eternal All-Powerful One, the One Knowing of All Things, then as well as having to gather together in a particular measure from most of the varieties of beings in the world the body of the tiniest thing like a fly, the particles which work in that tiny fly’s body will have to know the mysteries of the fly’s creation and its perfect art in all its minutest details. For as all the intelligent agree, natural causes and physical causes cannot create out of nothing. In which case, if they do create, they will gather the being together. And since they will gather it together – whatever animate being it is, there are within it samples of most of the elements and most of the varieties of beings, for living creatures are quite simply like a seed or essence of the universe – it will of course be necessary for them to gather together a seed from the whole tree and an animate being from the whole face of the earth sifting them through a fine sieve and measuring them with the most sensitive balance. And since natural causes are ignorant and lifeless, and have no knowledge with which to determine a plan, index, model, or program according to which they can smelt and pour the particles which enter the immaterial mold of the being in question, so they do not disperse and spoil its order, it is clear how far it is from possibility and reason to suppose that, without mold or measure, they can make the particles of the elements which flow like floods remain one on the other in the form of an orderly mass without dispersing, for everything has a single form and measure amid possibilities without calculation or count. For sure, everyone who does not suffer from blindness in his heart will see it. Yes, in consequence of this truth, according to the meaning of the verse,

Those on whom you call besides God cannot create [even] a fly, if they all met together for the purpose, (22:73)[[8]](#footnote-8)

if all material causes were to gather together and if they possessed will, they could not gather together the being of a single fly and its systems and organs with their particular balance. And even if they could gather them together, they could not make them remain in the specified measure of the being. And even if they could make them remain thus, they could not make those minute particles, which are constantly being renewed and coming into existence and working, work regularly and in order. In which case, self-evidently, causes cannot claim ownership of things. That is to say, their True Owner is someone else. Indeed, their True Owner is such that, according to the verse,

Your creation and your resurrection is as a single soul, (32:28)

He raises to life all the living beings on the face of the earth as easily as He raises to life a single fly. He creates the spring as easily as He creates a single flower. For He has no need to gather things together. Since He is the owner of the command of “‘Be!’ and it is;” and since every spring He creates from nothing the innumerable attributes, states, and forms of the innumerable beings of spring together with the elements of their physical beings; and since He determines the plan, model, index, and program of everything in His knowledge; and since all minute particles are in motion within the sphere of His knowledge and power; He therefore creates everything with infinite ease as though striking a match. And nothing at all confuses its motion so much as an iota. And minute particles are like a regular, disciplined army in the same way that the planets are an obedient army.

Since they are in motion relying on that pre-eternal power and function in accordance with the principles of that pre-eternal knowledge, those works come into existence in accordance with the power. They therefore cannot be deemed insignificant by considering their unimportant individualities. For through the strength of being connected to that power, a fly can kill off Nimrod, and an ant can destroy the Pharaoh’s palace, and the minute seed of the pine bears on its shoulder the burden of the pine-tree as tall as a mountain. We have proved this truth in numerous places in the Risale-i Nur: just as through his enlistment in the army and being connected to the king, an ordinary soldier can take another king prisoner, exceeding his own capacity a hundred thousand times; so too, by being connected to pre-eternal power, all things can manifest miracles of art exceeding the capacity of natural causes hundreds of thousands of times.

In Short: The fact that all things come into existence with both infinite art and infinite ease shows that they are the works of a Pre-Eternal All-Powerful One possessing all-encompassing knowledge. Otherwise, let alone coming into existence with a hundred thousand difficulties, leaving the bounds of possibility and entering those of impossibility y, nothing could even come into existence, indeed, their coming into existence would be impossible and precluded.

Thus, through this most subtle, powerful, profound, and clear proof, my soul, which had been a temporary student of Satan and the spokesman for the people of misguidance and the philosophers, was silenced, and, all praise be to God, came to believe completely. It said:

Yes, what I need is a Creator and Sustainer who possesses the power to know the least thoughts of my heart and my most secret wishes; and as He will answer the most hidden needs of my spirit, so he will transform the mighty earth into the hereafter in order to give me eternal happiness, and remove this world and put the hereafter in its place; and create the heavens as He creates a fly; and as He fastens the sun as an eye in the face of the sky, so he can situate a particle in the pupil of my eye. For one who cannot create a fly cannot intervene in the thoughts of my heart and cannot hear the pleas of my spirit. One who cannot create the heavens, cannot give me eternal happiness. In which case, my Sustainer is He who both purifies my heart’s thoughts, and like He fills and empties the skies with clouds in an hour, so he will transform this world into the hereafter, make Paradise, and open its doors to me, bidding me to enter.

My elderly brothers who as a result of misfortune, like my soul, have spent part of their lives on lightless Western materialist philosophy and science! Understand from the sacred decree of *“There is no god but He”* perpetually uttered by the tongue of the Qur’an, just how powerful, true, unshakeable, undamageable, unchanging, and sacred a pillar of belief it is, and how it disperses all spiritual darkness and cures all spiritual wounds!

I included this long story among the doors of hope of my old age as though involuntarily. I did not want to include it, indeed, I held back from doing so because I thought it would be tedious. But I have to say that I felt compelled to write it. Anyway, to return to the main topic:

In consequence of grey hairs appearing in my hair and beard and of a loyal friend’s unfaithfulness, I felt a disgust at the pleasures of Istanbul’s worldly life which was so glittering and superficially agreeable and gilded. My soul searched for spiritual pleasures in place of the pleasures with which it was obsessed. It wanted a light, a solace, in this old age which in the view of the heedless is cold, burdensome, and disagreeable. And all praise be to God and a hundred thousand thanks, just as I found true, lasting, and sweet pleasures of belief in *“There is no god but He*” and in the light of divine unity in place of all those false, disagreeable, fleeting worldly pleasures, so through the light of divine unity, I saw old age which in the view of the heedless is cold and burdensome to be most light, and warm, and luminous.

O you elderly men and women! Since you have belief and since you pray and offer supplications which illuminate and increase belief, you can regard your old age as eternal youth. For through it you can gain eternal youth. The old age which in truth is cold, burdensome, ugly, dark, and full of pain is the old age of the people of misguidance, indeed, their youth as well. It is they who should weep with sighs and regrets. While you, respected believing elderly people, should joyfully offer thanks saying: *“All praise and thanks be to God for every situation!”*

# TWELFTH HOPE

One time, I was being held in the district of Barla in the province of Isparta in a distressing captivity called exile, in a truly wretched state suffering both illness, and old age, and absence from home, and in a village alone with no one, barred from all company and communication. Then, in His perfect mercy, Almighty God bestowed a light on me concerning the subtle points and mysteries of the All-Wise Qur’an which was a source of consolation for me. With it, I tried to forget my pitiful, sad state. I was able to forget my native land, my friends and relations, but alas, there was one person I could not forget and that was Abdurrahman, who was both my nephew, and my spiritual son, and my most devoted student, and my bravest friend. He had parted from me six or seven years previously. Neither he knew where I was so that he could hasten to help and console me, nor did I know his situation so that I could correspond with him and we could confide in each other. Now in my old age, I was in need of someone loyal and self-sacrificing like him.

Then out of the blue someone gave me a letter. I opened it and saw it was from Abdurrahman, written in a way which showed his true self. A part of it that clearly shows three instances of wonder-working has been included among the pieces of the Twenty-Seventh Letter. It made me weep, and it still makes me weep. The late Abdurrahman wrote in the letter seriously and sincerely that he was disgusted with the pleasures of the world and that his greatest desire was to reach me and look to my needs in my old age just as I had looked to his when he was young. He also wanted to help me with his capable pen in spreading the mysteries of the Qur’an, my true duty in this world. He even wrote in his letter: *“Send me twenty or thirty treatises and I’ll write out twenty or thirty copies of each and get others to write them.”*

His letter made me feel very hopeful in respect of the world. With the thought that I had found a bold student who was so intelligent as to be a genius and would assist me more loyally and with greater attachment than a true son, I forgot my torturous captivity, loneliness, exile, and old age.

He had obtained a copy of the Tenth Word about belief in the hereafter before writing the letter. It was as if it had been a remedy for him curing all the spiritual wounds he had received during those six or seven years. He then wrote the letter to me as if he was awaiting his death with a truly strong and shining belief. Then one or two months later while thinking of once again passing a happy worldly life together with Abdurrahman, alas, I received news of his death. I was so shaken that five years later I am still under its effect. It afflicted me with a grief, sorrow, and sense of separation far exceeding the torturous captivity, aloneness, exile, old age, and illness I was then suffering. Half of my private world had died with the death of my mother, and now with Abdurrahman’s death, the other half died. My ties with the world were now completely cut. For if he had lived, he could have been both a powerful help in my duties which looked to the hereafter, and a worthy successor to fill my place completely after me, and a most self-sacrificing friend and consolation. He would have been my cleverest student and companion, and a most trustworthy protector and owner of the Risale-i Nur.

Yes, in regard to humanity, such losses are extremely distressing and painful for people like me. It’s true outwardly I was trying to endure it, but a fierce storm was raging in my spirit. If from time to time solace proceeding from the Qur’an’s light had not consoled me, I would not have been able to endure it. At the time I used to wander alone in the mountains and valleys of Barla. Sitting in lonely places amid my sorrows, pictures of the happy life I had spent in former times with my loyal students like Abdurrahman passed through my imagination like the cinema; since due to old age and exile I was swiftly affected, they broke my resistance. Suddenly the sacred meaning of the verse,

Everything shall perish save His countenance; His is the command, and to Him shall you return (28:88)

was unfolded to me. It caused me to declare: *“O Eternal One, You alone are Eternal! O Eternal One, You alone are Eternal!”*, and truly consoled me.

Then, inspired by this verse’s meaning as is described in the treatise, The Highway of the Practices of the Prophet (UWBP), I saw myself while in that lonely valley and sad state, at the head of three vast corpses:

One was the sight of myself as a gravestone on the grave of the fifty-five dead Said’s of my fifty-five years who had been buried in the course of my life.

The second corpse was the vast corpse of all my fellow-men who had died since the time of Adam (UWP) and had been buried in the grave of the past. I saw myself as a miniscule ant-like living creature at the head of that corpse, wandering over the face of this century, which was like its gravestone.

The third corpse was the greater world which, like human beings and the travelling worlds which every year die, would also – in accordance with the above verse – die; this was embodied before my imagination.

Then the verse,

But if they turn away, say: *“God suffices me, there is no god but He; in Him do I place my trust—He the Sustainer of the Throne [of Glory] Supreme!”* (9:129)

illuminated with its true solace and inextinguishable light that awesome vision arising from my grief at Abdurrahman’s death; it came to my assistance with its allusive meaning, which states: since Almighty God exists, He takes the place of everything. Since He is Eternal, He is surely sufficient. A single manifestation of His grace takes the place of the whole world. One manifestation of His light infuses with life the three vast corpses mentioned above, showing that they are not corpses but having completed their duties, have departed for other worlds. This mystery has been explained in the Third Flash, so that sufficing with the above, here I only say that the two repetitions of the phrase: *“O Eternal One, You alone are Eternal! O Eternal One, You alone are Eternal!”*, which illustrates the meaning of *“Everything shall perish save His countenance [to the end of the verse],”* (28:88) saved me from that distressing, sad state. It was like this:

The first time I uttered *“O Eternal One, You alone are Eternal!”*, it began to cure me like a surgical operation on the endless spiritual wounds arising from the passing of the world and of the friends in this world to whom I was attached, and from the ties binding me being broken.

The second time, the phrase *“O Eternal One, You alone are Eternal!”* was both a salve and an antidote for all those innumerable wounds. That is to say: *“You are eternal. If the rest depart, let them; You are enough for me. Since You abide for ever, a single manifestation of Your mercy is sufficient in place of all transient things. Since You exist, everything exists for the person who knows of the connection with Your existence established through belief and Islam acts in accordance with that relation. Transience and decline, death and non-existence are a veil, a renewal; like travelling through different domains.”* Thinking this, my painful, sad, grievous, dark, awesome, separation-stained state of mind was transformed into a happy, joyful, pleasurable, luminous, lovable, familiar state. My tongue and heart, indeed all the particles of my being through the tongue of disposition, exclaimed: *“All praise be to God!”*

One thousandth of that manifestation of mercy is this: I returned to Barla from that sorrowful valley and melancholy state of mind, where I saw that a young man called Kuleönlü Mustafa had come to ask me some questions about the five daily prayers and ablutions. Although I did not accept visitors at that hour, my spirit perceived as though with foresight his sincerity of spirit and the future valuable services he would perform for the Risale-i Nur, and I did not turn him away, I accepted him. It later became clear that Almighty God sent Mustafa to me as a sample in place of Abdurrahman, who as a worthy successor would carry out completely the duty of a true heir in the work of the Risale-i Nur, as though saying: *“I took one Abdurrahman from you, but I shall give you thirty like the Mustafa you see in return, who will be both students, and nephews, and spiritual sons, and brothers, and self-sacrificing comrades in this duty for religion.”*

Yes, praise be to God, He gave me thirty Abdurrahman’s. So I told myself: *“O weeping heart! Since you have seen this sample and through him He has healed the most serious of your spiritual wounds, be assured that He will heal all the rest of them.”*

My elderly brothers and sisters who like me have lost at the time of their old age a child or relative they love dearly, and who have to bear the searing sorrows of separation together with the burdens of old age! You have understood from my situation that although it was much harsher than yours, it was cured and healed by a verse of the Qur’an. This being so, there are remedies in that sacred pharmacy to heal all your difficulties. If you have recourse to it through belief and make use of those remedies through worship, the heavy burdens of your old age and your sorrows will be alleviated considerably.

The reason for writing this long piece was to seek more prayers for Abdurrahman, not to weary you. Also, my purpose in showing my worst wound in an extremely grievous and unpleasant way which may upset you unduly and put you off, is to demonstrate what a wondrous remedy and brilliant light is the sacred antidote of the All-Wise Qur’an.

# THIRTEENTH HOPE

In this Hope I shall describe an important scene from my life; it is bound to be somewhat lengthy, so I hope you will not become bored or be offended.

After being saved from captivity in Russia during the Great War, my serving religion in the Darü’l-Hikmet kept me in Istanbul for two or three years. Then through the guidance of the All-Wise Qur’an and spiritual influence of Ghawth al-A’zam and the awakening of old age, I felt a weariness at the civilized life of Istanbul and a disgust at its glittering social life. A feeling of longing for my native land drove me there, I went to Van with the thought that since I am bound to die, I’ll die in my own country.

First of all, I went to visit my medrese[[9]](#footnote-9) in Van, the Horhor. The Armenians had razed it during the Russian occupation, like the rest of the buildings. It was right under and adjacent to Van’s famous citadel, which is a great monolith like a mountain. My true friends, brothers, and close students of the medrese were embodied before my eyes. Some of those devoted friends had become actual martyrs, while others had died due to that calamity and had in effect become martyrs.

I could not restrain myself from weeping. I climbed to the top of the citadel which overlooking the medrese, towers above it to the height of two minarets, and I sat down. I went back in my imagination seven or eight years. Having a powerful imagination, I wandered all around that time in my mind. There was no one around to distract me and draw me back. For I was alone. As my view of those seven or eight years expanded, I saw enough to fill a century. I saw that the town at the foot of the citadel had been completely burnt and destroyed. It was as though two hundred years had passed from when I had seen it previously to them, it seemed so infinitely sad. Most of the houses’ inhabitants had been my friends and acquaintances. The majority of them had died in the migrations, may God have mercy on them, or had gone to a wretched exile. Only the Armenian quarter remained, all the Muslim houses of Van had been levelled. My heart was lacerated. I was so affected, if I had had a thousand eyes they would have all wept together. I had returned to my homeland from exile; I had supposed that I had been saved from exile. But alas! the most lamentable exile I experienced was in my homeland. I saw that hundreds of my students and friends to whom I had been closely attached, like Abdurrahman in the Twelfth Hope, had entered the grave and that their places were all ruins.

There were some lines that had long been in my mind but I had not understood their true meaning. Now before that sad scene I gained a full understanding of them. The lines were these: *“If there was no separation from friends, death could find no way to our spirits to seize them.”* That is to say, what kills man most is separation from those he loves. Yes, nothing had caused me as much suffering and sorrow as that situation. If assistance had not come from the Qur’an and from belief, my grief and sorrow and suffering would have made my spirit fly away.

Since early times in their verses, poets have lamented the destruction with time of the places they have been together with their beloveds. I had seen this most painfully with my own eyes. With the sorrow of someone passing by the dwellings of beloved friends after two hundred years, my heart and spirit joined my eyes in weeping. Then one by one the happy scenes of the life I had passed for nearly twenty years in study with my valuable students, when the places which were now in ruins were flourishing and happy, sprang to life before me like pictures at the cinema, then died away and vanished. This continued before the eye of my imagination for some time.

Then I felt astonished at the state of the worldly, how is it that they deceive themselves? For the situation there showed clearly that this world is transitory and that human beings are guests within it. I saw with my own eyes how true are the constantly repeated words of the people of reality: *“The world is cruel, treacherous, bad; don’t be deceived by it!”* I also saw that just as man is connected with his own body and household, so is he connected with his town, his country, and with the world. For while weeping with my two eyes at the pitifulness of old age in respect of my body, I wanted to weep with ten eyes not only at my medrese’s old age, but at its death. And I felt the need to weep with a hundred eyes at the half-death of my beautiful homeland.

It states in a Hadith that every morning an angel calls out: *“You are born to die, and construct buildings that they may be destroyed.”[[10]](#footnote-10)* I was hearing this truth not with my ears, but with my eyes.

Ten years later I still weep when I think of that situation, as it made me weep then. Yes, the ruins of the houses at the foot of the ancient citadel, thousands of years old, and the town ageing eight hundred years in eight years, and the death of my once- flourishing medrese which had been the gathering-place of friends, all indicated the vastness of the immaterial corpse of all the medreses in the Ottoman Empire, which now had died; the great monolith of Van’s citadel had become a gravestone to all of them. It was as though my students who had been together with me in the medrese eight years previously were weeping in their graves together with me. Indeed, the ruined walls of the town and its scattered stones were weeping with me. I saw them to be weeping.

Then I understood that I could not endure this exile in my native land. I thought that I would either have to join them in the grave, or withdraw into a cave in the mountains and await my death there. I told myself: “These unendurable, searing separations which destroy patience and resistance surely make death preferable to life. The pains of such a life are unbearable.”

I then cast a glance over the six aspects and saw that they were all black. The heedlessness resulting from my intense grief showed me the world as terrifying, empty, desolate, and about to collapse over my head. My spirit sought a point of support in the face of innumerable hostile calamities. Its endless desires which stretch to eternity were seeking out something to satisfy them. While awaiting consolation in the face of the sorrow arising from those endless separations and deaths, that endless devastation, suddenly the truth was manifested of the All-Wise Qur’an’s verses:

Whatever is in the heavens and on earth—let it declare the praises and glory of God; for He is Exalted in Might, the Wise. \* To Him belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth: it is He Who gives life and death; and He has power over all things. (57:1-2)

It saved me from that pitiful, terrible, sad, separation-stained imagining, and opened my eyes. I saw that the fruits at the tops of the fruit-trees were looking at me as though smiling. *“Note us as well,”* they were saying. *“Do not only look at the ruins.”* The verses’ truth brought the following thought to mind:

*“Why does an artificial letter written in the form of a town by the hand of man, who is a guest on the page of Van’s plain, being wiped out by a calamitous torrent called the Russian invasion sadden you to this extent? Consider the Pre-Eternal Inscriber, everything’s True Owner and Sustainer, for His missives on this page continue to be written in glittering fashion, in the way you used to see. Your weeping over those desolate ruins arises from the error of forgetting their True Owner, not thinking that men are guests and imagining them to be owner.”*

A door to reality opened up from my error, from that searing sight, and my soul was prepared to accept the reality completely. Like iron is plunged in the fire so that it softens and may be profited from, that grievous sight and terrible state were fire which softened my soul. Through the reality of the above verses, the Qur’an of Miraculous Exposition showed my soul the effulgence of the truths of belief, causing it to accept it.

Yes, all thanks be to God, as is proved conclusively in such parts of the Risale-i Nur as the Twentieth Letter, through the effulgence of belief in God, the truth of the verses becomes a source of strength for the spirit and heart which unfolds proportionately to the firmness of each person’s belief. This was so powerful it afforded me the strength to confront calamities even a hundred times more dreadful than the situation I beheld. It uttered this reminder: *“Everything is subjected to the command of this country’s True Owner, your Creator. He holds the reins of all things. Your relation with Him should be sufficient.”*

On recognizing my Creator and relying on Him, all the things that had appeared hostile gave up their enmity, and the grievous things that had made me weep started to make me happy. As we have demonstrated with certain proofs in many places in the Risale-i Nur, through the light proceeding from belief in the hereafter, that recognition and reliance afforded such assistance in the face of my endless desires that it was sufficient not only for my attachment to and desire for insignificant, temporary, brief worldly friendships, but for my innumerable far-reaching desires in the world of permanence, for everlasting happiness through all eternity. For through one manifestation of His mercy, the All-Merciful and Compassionate One ever y spring lays on the table of that season incalculable numbers of delightful, artful bounties in order to please His guests of one or two hours. Then after providing them with these, which are a sort of snack or appetizer, He prepares for His servants innumerable varieties of bounties, and for an unending time fills eight permanent Paradises with them from among His everlasting dwelling-places. The person who relies on the mercy of such an All-Merciful and Compassionate One through belief and knows his relation surely finds such a source of assistance that even its least degree provides for innumerable hopes reaching to eternity, and causes them to continue.

Furthermore, through the reality of the verses, the light proceeding from the effulgence of belief was manifested in such brilliant fashion that it lit up those six dark aspects like daytime. It illuminated the grief I felt for my students and friends in my medrese and in the town with this reminder: *“The world your friends have gone to is not dark. They have merely gone somewhere else; you will meet again.”* It put an end to my tears entirely, and made me understand that I would find others resembling them in this world who would take their place.

Yes, all praise be to God, He both raised to life the dead Van medrese with the medrese of Isparta, and He in meaning raised my friends there to life with the more numerous and valuable students and friends here. It also made known that the world is not empty and meaningless and that my thinking of it as a ravaged country had been wrong: as required by His wisdom, the True Owner changes the artificial scenes made by man and renews His missives. The more the fruits of some trees are plucked, the more others grow in their places; so too death and separation among mankind constitute renewal and change. In respect of belief, they are a renewal that produces not the grievous sorrow arising from the lack of friends, but the sweet sorrow born of parting in the hope of meeting again in another, better place.

The verses also illuminated the face of the beings in the universe which had appeared dark in the former ghastly situation. I wanted to offer thanks for this, and the following Arabic lines occurred to me, which described that reality exactly. I said: *“All praise be to God for the light of belief, which dispels the illusion of beings as hostile strangers, moribund and savage, as weeping orphans, and shows them to be loving brothers, living and familiar, joyfully employed in mentioning God’s names and glorifying Him.”*

That is to say, due to the heedlessness resulting from my grievous state of mind, some of the beings in the universe appeared to my neglectful soul as hostile and strange,[[11]](#footnote-11) others as awesome corpses, and yet others as orphans weeping in their loneliness. In the light of belief I saw that they were all friends and brothers. As for the awesome corpses, some were living and friendly while others had been released from their duties. Seeing through the light of belief the wailing of the orphans to be the murmuring of remembrance and glorification of God, I offered endless praise and thanks to the Glorious Creator, for He had given me belief, the source of these innumerable bounties. And seeing that it is incumbent on me to think of all the beings in my personal world, which is as vast as the world, as being engaged in the praise and glorification of God, and through intention to make use of them, it means that I say *“All praise and thanks to God for the light of belief”* together with all those beings, who utter it singly and as a whole through the tongue of disposition.

Moreover, the pleasures of life, which had been reduced to nothing by my heedless and dreadful state of mind, and my hopes, which had withered up entirely, and my personal enjoyment and bounties, which had been constricted within the narrowest bounds, indeed, destroyed, suddenly so expanded through the light of belief that narrow sphere around my heart that it contained the whole universe – as has been proved clearly in other parts of the Risale-i Nur – and in place of the bounties which had withered up in the garden of the Horhor Medrese and lost their taste, it made the realms of this world and the hereafter each a merciful table of bounties. It showed that not only the ten or so human members like the eyes, ears, and heart, but also the hundred members were an extremely long arm which believers might extend each according to his degree, to those two tables of the Most Merciful, to gather in the bounties from all sides. At that time, I uttered the following words both to express this elevated truth, and as thanks for those endless bounties:

*“I offer praise and thanks to my Creator for the light and bounty of belief to my very utmost, with all the particles of my being, for it shows me that this world and the hereafter are overflowing with bounties and mercy, and allows me and all true believers to benefit from those two vast tables with the hands of all their senses, which develop and unfold through the light of belief and Islam.”*

Since belief is so tremendously effective in this world, certainly in the Eternal Realm it will have such fruits and effulgences that they cannot be comprehended with the mind in this world, nor described.

O you elderly people who like me experience the pains of separation from numerous friends due to old age! However much older than me in years the oldest of you is, my guess is that in meaning I am older than him. For since by nature I feel excessive pity and compassion for my fellow beings, I have experienced the sufferings of thousands of my brothers in addition to my own pains and feel as though I have lived for hundreds of years. However much you have suffered the calamity of separation, you have not suffered it as I have. For I have no son that I should think only of him. I feel pain and sympathy towards thousands of Muslim sons and their sorrows, and even innocent animals, due to the excessive pity and compassion in my nature. I do not have a house of my own that I should think only of it; I am bound through Islamic zeal to this country and even the Islamic world, as though they were my house. I am saddened at the pains of my fellow Muslims in those two great houses, and am sorrowful at being parted from them!

Thus, the light of belief was sufficient for me and all my sorrows arising from old age and the pains of separation; it gave me an inextinguishable hope, an unassailable faith, an unquenchable light, unending solace. Belief then is certainly more than enough for you in the face of the darkness, heedlessness, sorrows, and griefs of old age. In fact, the old age that is utterly black and lacking in light and solace, and is the most grievous and terrible separation, is the old age and separation suffered by the people of misguidance and the dissipated. It is possible to experience the belief that affords hope, light, and solace, and its effects by adopting a consciously worshipful attitude, worthy of old age and appropriate to Islam. It is not possible by trying to imitate the young, and plunging one’s head into heedlessness and forgetting old age.

Dwell on the Hadith, the meaning of which is: *“The best of the youths among you are those who imitate those of mature years, while the worst of your elderly are those who imitate the young.”* That is to say, *“The best youths are those who resemble the elderly in self-restraint and abstaining from vice, while the worst elderly people are those who resemble the young in plunging themselves into dissipation and heedlessness.*

My elderly brothers and sisters! There is a Hadith which says: *“Divine mercy is ashamed to leave unanswered the prayers offered to the divine court by elderly believers of sixty or seventy years.”* Seeing that divine mercy holds you in such respect, be respectful towards this respect by performing your worship!

# FOURTEENTH HOPE

The summary at the start of the Fourth Ray, on the luminous verse *“For us God suffices,”* (3:173) describes how having been isolated from everything by ‘the worldly’, I was afflicted with five sorts of exile. The heedlessness arising from distress led me to look not to the consoling lights of the Risale-i Nur which would have aided me, but directly to my heart and my spirit. I saw that governing in me were an overpowering desire for immortality, an intense love of existence, a great yearning for life, together with an infinite impotence and endless want. But an awesome transience was extinguishing the immortality. Suffering this state of mind, I exclaimed like the poet:

*Reality wanted the passing of my body, though my heart desired its immortality;*

*I was afflicted with an incurable ill that not even Luqman could cure!*

I bowed my head in despair. Suddenly the verse, *“For us God suffices, and He is the Best Disposer of Affairs”* came to my assistance, summoning me to read it with attention. So I recited it five hundred times every day. The more I recited it, nine levels of meaning were unfolded to me out of its many lights, at the level of ‘certainty at the degree of knowledge,’ and even of ‘certainty at the degree of witnessing.’

 The First Level of the Luminous Verse “For us God suffices”

 By virtue of a shadow in my essential being of a manifestation of a name of the One of Glory and Perfection, who, possessing absolute perfection, is of Himself and for no other reason worthy of love, I had an innate desire for immortality, directed not to my own immortality but to the existence, perfection, and immortality of that Absolutely Perfect One. But due to heedlessness that innate love had lost its way, become attached to the shadow and enamored of the mirror of immortality. Then the verse*, “For us God suffices, and He is the Best Disposer of Affairs”* raised the veil. I saw and felt and experienced at the degree of ‘absolute certainty’ that the pleasure and happiness of my immortality lay exactly and in more perfect form in the immortality of the Enduring One of Perfection and in affirming my Sustainer and God, and in believing in Him, and submitting to Him. The evidence for this has been explained in the Fourth Ray, the treatise on the verse *“For us God suffices,”* in twelve sections which are extremely profound and subtle and will fill with wonder anyone with fine sensibilities.

The Second Level of the Luminous Verse “For us God suffices”

At a time when, in my old age, exile, aloneness, and isolation, ‘the worldly’ were attacking me with their spies and stratagems despite my boundless innate impotence, I told my heart: *“Whole armies are attacking a single man whose hands are tied and is ill and weak. Is there nothing from which he can seek help?”* I had recourse to the verse *“For us God suffices and He is the Best Disposer of Affairs,”* and it informed me of the following:

Through the document of belief, you become connected to a Ruler of Absolute Power who every spring equips in perfect order all the plant and animal armies on the face of the earth composed of four hundred thousand different nations. In addition, He places in the ‘extracts’ of the Most Merciful known as seeds and grains, which are like the meat, sugar and other food extracts discovered recently by the people of civilization but a hundred times more perfect, all the sustenance of the huge armies of foremost man, and of all the animals. He folds up inside those extracts the instructions of divine determining concerning their cooking and development, and places them in their tiny protective cases. The creation of those tiny coffers is with such ease, speed, and abundance from the “Ka\f. Nu\n” factory, which is governed by the command of *“‘Be!’ and it is,”* that the Qur’an states: *“The Creator merely commands and it comes into being.”* Gaining such support with the document of the relationship of belief, you can rely on an infinite strength and power. As I assimilated this lesson from the verse, I found such a moral strength arising from belief that through its power I could have challenged not only my present enemies, but the whole world. With all my spirit I declared: *“For us God suffices, and He is the Best Disposer of Affairs!”*

The Third Level of the Luminous Verse “For us God suffices”

At a time when, finding my attachment to the world to be broken due to suffering the oppression of those exiles and illnesses, belief recalled to me that I was destined for perpetual happiness in an eternal world, an everlasting realm, I gave up sighing regretfully, which caused further grief and yearning, and became cheerful and happy. However, this goal of the imagination and spirit and result of man’s nature could only be realized through the infinite power of an Absolutely Omnipotent One who knows and records the action and rest and conduct and states, in word and deed, of all creatures, and takes as His friend and addressee insignificant and absolutely impotent man, giving him a rank superior to all beings; it could only be realized through His infinite favors to man and the importance He gives him. While thinking of these two points, that is, the activity of such a power and the importance of apparently insignificant man, I wanted an explanation which would deepen belief and satisfy the heart. Again I had recourse to the verse, and it told me to note the *“na\,” “For us,”* and to heed who is saying *“For us God suffices”* together with me.

I at once looked and saw that innumerable birds and flies, which are miniature birds, and uncountable animals, and boundless plants and trees were, like me, reciting through the tongue of disposition *“For us God suffices, and He is the Best Disposer of Affairs.”* They recall to everyone the immensity and majesty of a power which before our eyes particularly in the spring creates in most abundant plenitude, with the greatest ease and on a vast scale, from eggs, seeds, grains, and droplets of fluid, which all resemble each other and whose substance is the same, the hundred thousand species of birds, the hundreds of thousands of sorts of animals, the hundred thousand types of plants, and the hundred thousand varieties of trees, without error, defect, or confusion, in adorned, balanced, well-ordered fashion, and in forms all different from one another. They demonstrate to us His unity and oneness by being made in this way together, one within the other and resembling each other. I understood that any interference or participation in the dominical, creative act of disposal which displays thus incalculable miracles was not possible. Those who want to understand my personality and human character, which is like that of all believers, and those who want to be like me, should look at the explanation of the ‘I’ in the first person plural ‘us’ in *“For us God suffices,”* that is, the explanation of myself. What is my apparently insignificant, wanting being – like that of all believers? What is life? What is humanity? What is Islam? What is certain, affirmative belief? What is knowledge of God? How should love be? They should understand and take a lesson!

The Fourth Level of the Luminous Verse *“For us God suffices”*

A time I was being shaken by old age, exile, illness, and defeat coincided with a period of heedlessness. I was grievously anxious that my being, to which I was intensely attached and by which I was captivated, indeed all creatures, were departing for non-existence, then again I had recourse to the verse. It told me: *“Note my meaning carefully and look through the telescope of belief!”*

So I looked and with the eye of belief and saw that like all believers, my miniscule being was the mirror of a limitless being, and through infinite expansion, the means of gaining innumerable existences, and was a word of wisdom producing the fruits of numerous permanent existences far more valuable than itself. I knew with ‘certainty at the degree of knowledge’ that to live for an instant in this respect was as valuable as an eternal existence. For I understood through the consciousness of belief that this being of mine was the work of art, artefact, and manifestation of the Necessarily Existent One. So being saved from the anxiety of loneliness and from innumerable separations and their pains, I formed relations and bonds of brotherhood with beings to the number of divine acts and names connected with beings and especially living beings, and I knew that there was a permanent union with all the beings I loved, and only a temporary separation. And so, through belief and the relations of belief, like all beings, my being gained the lights of innumerable existences untouched by separation. Even if it departed, they would remain behind and it would be happy as though it had remained itself.

In short, death is not separation, it is union; it is a change of abode; it is the producing of an eternal fruit.

The Fifth Level of the Luminous Verse *“For us God suffices”*

Another time my life was being shaken by harsh conditions, they directed my attention towards life. I saw that my life was departing at speed; the hereafter was drawing close; due to the oppression I was suffering my life had started to be extinguished. As is explained in the section of the Risale-i Nur on the divine name of Ever-Living, I thought sorrowfully of how with its important functions, and great benefits and virtues, life did not deserve to be so swiftly extinguished but to last a long time. I again had recourse to my master, the verse, *“For us God suffices, and He is the Best Disposer of Affairs.”* This time it told me: *“Consider life from the point of view of the Ever-Living and Self-Subsistent One, who gives you life!”*

So I looked and I saw that if only one aspect of my life looked to me, a hundred looked to the Ever-Living and Self-Subsistent One. And if, of its results, one looked to me, a thousand looked to my Creator. Since this is the case, to live for one instant within the bounds of divine pleasure is sufficient; a long time is not required. This truth may be explained in four matters. Anyone who is not dead or who wants to be alive should seek the nature and reality of life and its true rights in those four matters; they will find them and be raised to life!

A summary is this: the more life looks to the Ever-Living and Self-Subsistent One, and the more belief becomes the life and spirit of life, the more it becomes perpetual and produces enduring fruits. It also becomes so elevated that it receives the manifestation of eternity; it no longer looks to the brevity or length of a lifetime.

The Sixth Level of the Luminous Verse *“For us God suffices”*

At a time when my advancing years and old age were giving warning of my particular parting amid the events of the end of time, which tell of the destruction of the world, the time of general parting, the feelings in my nature of love of beauty and passion for loveliness and fascination by perfection were unfolding in an extraordinarily sensitive manner. I saw with extraordinary clarity and sorrow that transience and decline, which are always destructive, and death and non-existence, which perpetually cause separations, were tearing apart this beautiful world and these beautiful creatures in terrible fashion, and destroying their beauty. The metaphorical love in my nature boiled up and rebelled against this situation. In order to find consolation, I again had recourse to the verse *“For us God suffices.”* It told me: *“Recite me and consider my meaning carefully!”* So I entered the observatory of the verse in Sura al-Nur,

God is the Light of the Heavens and the Earth [to the end of the verse], (24:35)

and looked through the telescope of belief to the most distant levels of the verse *“For us God suffices,”* then through the microscope of the insight of belief at its most subtle mysteries, and saw the following:

Mirrors, pieces of glass, transparent things, and even bubbles, show the various hidden beauties of the sun’s light and of the seven colors in its light; and through their disappearance and renewal, and different capacities and refractions, they renew that beauty; and with their reflections, they display the hidden beauties and loveliness of the sun and its light. In exactly the same way, in order to act as mirrors to the sacred beauty of the All-Beauteous One of Glory, the Pre-Eternal and Post-Eternal Sun, and to the everlasting loveliness of His most beautiful names, and to renew their manifestations, these beautiful creatures, these lovely artefacts, these exquisite beings, arrive and depart without stopping. Powerful proofs are expounded in detail in the Risale-i Nur that demonstrate that the beauties apparent on them belong not to them, but are signs, indications, flashes, and manifestations of a transcendent, sacred beauty which wants to become manifest. The explanation begins by saying that three of those proofs have been mentioned briefly and most reasonably. The treatise leaves in amazement everyone of fine perception who sees it so that in addition to benefiting from it themselves, they find it necessary to try to allow others to benefit from it. Anyone whose mind is not rotten and heart not corrupted, will appreciate, admire, and recommend the five points explained in the second proof, and exclaiming: *“Ma’shallah! Barakallah!”* will perceive and affirm that it is a wondrous marvel which will exalt his apparently lowly, wanting being.

# FIFTEENTH HOPE

One time when I was in compulsory residence in Emirdağ, in what was virtually solitary confinement, I became wearied of life due to the torments they inflicted on me with their surveillance and arbitrary treatment, which I found hard to bear, and I regretted having been released from prison. I longed for Denizli Prison with all my spirit, and wanted to enter the grave. But while thinking, prison and the grave are preferable to such a life, and deciding to enter one or the other, divine grace came to my assistance: it bestowed on the students of the Medresetü’z-Zehra,[[12]](#footnote-12) whose pens were like duplicating machines, one of the machines, which had just appeared. All at once, five hundred copies each of the valuable collections of the Risale-i Nur appeared from a single pen. Their presaging new victories made me love that distressing life, and caused me to offer unending thanks.

A while later, unable to endure the Risale-i Nur’s victories, its covert enemies prompted the government to act against us. Again life became difficult for me. Then suddenly dominical grace was manifested: the officials connected with the case, who were those most in need of the Risale-i Nur, studied the confiscated copies in the course of their duties most curiously and carefully, and its treatises gave their hearts a sense of bias towards it. As they began to appreciate it rather than criticize it, the Risale-i Nur’s circle of study greatly expanded. It produced profits a hundred times greater than our material losses, reducing to nothing our anxiety and distress.

Then, secret, hostile dissemblers directed the government’s attention towards my person. They recalled my former political activities. They aroused suspicions about me in both the judiciary, and the education authorities, and the police, and the Home Affairs Office. These spread at the hand of the different parties and the incitement of concealed communist anarchists. They started to pressure us and arrest us, and confiscate the parts of the Risale-i Nur that fell into their hands. The activities of the Risale-i Nur students came to a standstill. A number of officials made false accusations which no one at all could believe. They tried to spread around the most extraordinary slander, but they could make no one believe it.

Then they arrested me during the coldest days of winter on some trite pretext, and put me into solitary confinement in prison in a large and extremely cold ward, leaving me two days without a stove. I was accustomed to light my stove several times a day in my small room and always had live coals in the brazier, so with my illness and weakness I could endure it only with difficulty. While struggling in this situation suffering from both a fever and the cold, and dreadful distress and anger, a truth unfolded in my heart through divine grace. It uttered the following warning to my spirit:

*“You called prison the Medrese-i Yûsufiye – the School of the Prophet Joseph, and while in Denizli, things like relief a thousand times greater than your distress, and spiritual profit, and the other prisoners benefiting from the Risale-i Nur, and its widespread triumphs, all made you offer endless thanks instead of complaining. They made each hour of your imprisonment and hardship the equivalent of ten hours’ worship, and made those passing hours eternal. God willing, the calamity-stricken in this third School of Joseph benefiting from the Risale-i Nur and finding consolation will heat this cold, severe distress of yours and transform it into joy. If the people you are angry at are being deceived and are ill-treating you without realizing it, they are not worth being angry at. And if they are tormenting you and causing you suffering knowingly, out of spite and on account of misguidance, they will in a short time enter the solitary confinement of the grave due to the eternal execution of death, to suffer everlasting torment and torture. Their oppression is earning for you both merit and spiritual pleasures, and is making transient hours eternal, and is allowing you to perform scholarly and religious duties with sincerity.”*

With all my strength I exclaimed: *“All praise be to God!”* Out of humanity, I pitied those tyrants and prayed: *“O my Sustainer, reform them!”* As I wrote in my statement to the Ministry of Internal Affairs, in this new incident the truly guilty are those tyrants who in ten respects act unlawfully in the name of the law. They found extraordinary pretexts showing to anyone fair-minded with their slanders and fabrications, which would have made those who heard them laugh and lovers of the truth weep, that they can find no way to attack the Risale-i Nur and its students in respect of the law and right, so deviate into lunacy.

For instance, the officials who spied on us for a month could find nothing incriminating, so they wrote out a memorandum saying: *“Said’s servants bought raki from a shop and took it to him.”* They could find no one to sign the memo, but finally arrested a drunken stranger and got him to sign it under threat. Even he said: *“God forgive us! Who would sign this extraordinary lie?”* So they were compelled to tear it up.

A  S e c o n d  E x a m p l e : Someone I did not know and still do not know, lent his horse so that I could go out for a ride. I used to go out most days for a couple of hours in the summer, for my illness and to take some air. I had given my word that I would give the owner of the horse and phaeton books worth fifty liras, so as not to break my rule and become indebted to him. Could any harm come of such a thing? But then both the Governor, and the court officials, and the police questioned us fifty times about the horse’s owner. As though it were some important political event affecting public security! One person even said loyally that the horse was his and another, that the phaeton was his, in order to put a stop to this meaningless questioning, and they were both arrested together with me. We watched numerous childish escapades like these two examples and laughed till we cried. And we understood that those who attack the Risale-i Nur and its students make fools of themselves.

An amusing incident from among those examples: the reason given on the paper authorizing my arrest was *“disturbing public order.”* Not having seen the document, I told the public prosecutor: *“I slandered you last night. I said to a police officer who was questioning me for the Police Chief: ‘If I haven’t served this country’s public security as much as a thousand public prosecutors and a thousand police chiefs – three times – may God damn me!’”*

Just at that point, when in those freezing conditions I was in most need of rest and not catching cold and not thinking of the world, I was overcome with anger and vexation at those who had sent me into this intolerable exile, isolation, imprisonment, and oppression, in a way that spelt out their hatred and ill-intentions. Divine grace came to my assistance, and the following was imparted to my heart:

“Divine determining, which is pure justice, has a large part in the wrongful oppression which these people are inflicting on you. You have food to eat in this prison; that sustenance of yours called you here. It should be met with contentment and resignation. Dominical wisdom and mercy have a large part, which is to illuminate those in this prison and console them, and to gain you reward. This share should be met with endless thanks and patience. Your soul has a part in it, due to its faults which you did not know about. In the face of this, you should tell your soul by repenting and seeking forgiveness that it deserved this blow. Some of your secret enemies have a part in it, with their intrigues and deceiving certain ingenuous and suspicious officials and inciting them to such oppression. In the face of this share, the terrible immaterial blows dealt by the Risale-i Nur on those dissemblers have avenged you completely. That is enough for them. The final part is the officials who were the actual means. In the face of this share, it is an act of magnanimity to forgive them in accordance with the rule,

Those who suppress their anger and forgive people—verily God loves those who do good, (3:134)

for whether they wanted to or not they may have benefited from the Risale-i Nur in respect of belief, although they looked at with the intention of criticizing it.

I felt such happiness and gratitude at this veracious warning that I decided to commit some harmless offence and incur a prison sentence, so that I might remain in this new School of Joseph and perhaps even help those who were opposed to me. For someone like me who was seventy-five years old, without attachment, and only five out of the seventy people he loved in this world remained alive, the grave was a hundred times preferable to this prison. For seventy thousand copies of the treatises of the Risale-i Nur were in free circulation and would perform my duties connected with the Risale-i Nur, and I had brothers and heirs who would continue to serve belief with thousands of tongues in place of my one tongue. This prison too was a hundred times more comfortable and more beneficial than the unfree liberty outside subject to that tyranny and oppression. For in place of having to suffer all alone outside the arbitrary treatment of hundreds of officials, in prison, together with hundreds of other prisoners one only has to suffer the slight arbitrariness of one or two people like the prison governor and chief warder, which will yield benefits. And in the face of this, one receives the brotherly kindness and consolation of many fellow-prisoners. With the thought that the compassion of Islam and human nature are shown as kindness to the elderly in such a position, thus turning the hardship of prison into mercy, I became resigned to prison.

At the time I attended this third trial, because of my difficulty in remaining on my feet due to weakness, old age, and illness, I sat on a chair outside the door of the court. The judge suddenly appeared and angrily asked in insulting manner: *“Why isn’t he waiting on his feet?”* I was angry at this unkindness in the face of my old age. Then I looked and saw that a large number of Muslims had gathered around us and were watching in most kind and brotherly fashion, and not dispersing. I was suddenly warned of the following two truths:

T h e  F i r s t : The covert enemies of myself and the Risale-i Nur had deceived certain ingenuous officials with the intention of putting a stop to the Risale-i Nur’s conquests by destroying the public’s good opinion of me, which in any event I did not want, and of destroying my character in the people’s view; they had prompted those officials to act contemptuously towards me in that way. See these hundred people in place of that one man’s insults! In return for the Risale-i Nur’s service to belief – as a divine favor – they are kindly offering their sympathy by appreciating your service, and both welcoming you and seeing you off. Even, while I was in the examining magistrate’s office on the second day of the trial answering the public prosecutor’s questions, around a thousand people gathered in the courtyard opposite the court windows and showed their concern; they appeared to be telling them through the tongue of disposition not to pressurize us. The police could not make them disperse. It was imparted to my heart that in this dangerous age these people want a true solace, an inextinguishable light, powerful belief, and certain good news about eternal happiness, and that they search for these by nature. They must have heard that what they are searching for is to be found in the Risale-i Nur so that they show my unimportant person much more attention than I deserve because I have performed some small services for belief.

S e c o n d  T r u t h : I was reminded that in return for the ill-treatment a few contemptuous, deceived individuals inflicted on us with the intention of insulting us and destroying public regard for us, due to their unfounded suspicions of our disturbing public order, was the applause and appreciation of innumerable people of reality and forthcoming generations.

Yes, through the strength of certain, affirmative belief, in every part of this country the Risale-i Nur and its students halt the awesome corruption and efforts of anarchy to destroy public order under the veil of communism. They work to maintain public order and security so that these twenty years three or four related courts and the police of ten provinces have not been able to find or record any incidents involving the infringement of public order connected with the Risale-i Nur students, who are very numerous and found in every part of the country. And the fair-minded police of three provinces stated: *“The Risale-i Nur students are moral police. They assist us in preserving public order. Through certain, affirmative belief, they leave in everyone’s head who reads the Risale-i Nur something that restrains them from committing misdemeanours. They work to maintain public order.”*

An example of this was Denizli Prison. When the Risale-i Nur entered there and Fruits of Belief was written for the prisoners, within a space of three or four months more than two hundred of those prisoners became so extraordinarily obedient and acquired such religious and righteous conduct that a man who had murdered three or four people refrained from killing bedbugs even. They became completely compassionate, harmless members of the nation. The officials were astonished at this situation and looked on in appreciation. Some youths even said before receiving their sentences: *“If the Nurjus remain in prison, we shall try to have ourselves convicted so that we can be taught by them and become like them. We shall reform ourselves through their instruction.”*

So those who accuse the Risale-i Nur students, who are thus, of disturbing public order are surely seriously deceived, or have been fooled, or knowingly or unknowingly are deceiving the government on account of anarchy, and try to crush and repress us. We say this to them:

Since death is not to be killed, and the grave is not to be closed, and the travelers in this guesthouse of the world, convoy after convoy enter the earth with great speed and ado, and vanish; for sure we shall part from one another very soon. You shall receive the penalty for your tyranny in awful fashion. At the very least you shall mount the gallows of death and eternal extinction, which form the discharge papers of the oppressed people of belief. The fleeting pleasures you have received in this world imagining them to be everlasting, will be transformed into everlasting, grievous pains.

Regretfully, our secret dissembling enemies sometimes attach the name of Sufism to the reality of Islam, which has been gained and preserved through the swords and blood of the hundred million martyrs at the rank of saints, and heroic war veterans of this religious nation. While the way of Sufism is only a single ray of that sun, they show it to be the sun and deceive certain lax government officials. Calling the Risale-i Nur students *“Sufis”* and *“members of a political society*” – because they work effectively for the truths of the Qur’an and belief – they want to incite them against us. We say to them, and to those who listen to them against us, what we told the just court at Denizli:

*“Let us too be sacrificed for this sacred truth for which hundreds of millions of people have been sacrificed! Even if you set fire to the world around us, we who sacrifice ourselves for the truths of the Qur’an will not lay down our arms before atheism; we shall not abandon our sacred duty, God willing!”*

Thanks to the sacred solace arising from belief and the Qur’an for the pains and despair at the adventures of my old age, I would not exchange this most distressing year of my old age for ten of the happiest years of my youth – especially since for those who repent and perform the obligatory prayers each hour in prison is the equivalent of ten hours’ worship, and with respect to merit, each transient day spent in illness and under oppression gains ten days of perpetual life. I thus understood from those warnings just how deserving of thanks are these days for someone like me awaiting his turn at the door of the grave. I exclaimed: *“Endless thanks be to my Sustainer!”*, and was happy at my old age and pleased with my imprisonment. For life does not stop, it passes swiftly. If it passes in pleasure and happiness, since the passing of pleasure is pain, it becomes transient, passing without thanks and in heedlessness; leaving sins in the place of pleasures, it departs. Whereas if it passes in prison and hardship, since the passing of pain is a sort of pleasure, and since it is considered to be a sort of worship, it becomes perpetual in one respect, and through its good fruits gains everlasting life. It becomes atonement for the mistakes that were the cause of past sins and imprisonment, and purifies them. From this point of view, the prisoners who perform the compulsory parts of the obligatory prayers should offer thanks in patience.

# SIXTEENTH HOPE

One time in my old age, I was released from Eskisehir Prison after serving a years’ sentence. They exiled me to Kastamonu, where I stayed for two or three months as a guest in the police station. It may be understood how much torment someone like me suffered in a place like that, who was a recluse, wearied by seeing even his loyal friends, and could not endure the changes in dress. While suffering this despair, divine grace suddenly came to the assistance of my old age. The inspector and police in the police station became like firm friends. They not once warned me about not wearing a peaked cap, and like my servants, used to take me for trips around the town.

Then I took up residence in Kastamonu’s Risale-i Nur Medrese, opposite the police station, and started to write further parts of the Risale-i Nur. Heroic Risale-i Nur students like Feyzi, Emin, Hilmi, Sâdık, Nazif, and Salâhaddin, attended the medrese in order to duplicate the treatises and disseminate them. We held scholarly debates even more brilliant than those I had held in my youth with my old students.

Then our hidden enemies aroused the suspicions of some officials and some egotistical hojas and shaykhs concerning us. They caused us and Risale-i Nur students from five or six provinces to be gathered together in the School of Joseph of Denizli Prison. The details of this Sixteenth Hope are described clearly in the brief letters I sent secretly to my brothers while in Denizli Prison, in those sent from Kastamonu, and in the collection containing the court defence speeches. So referring the details to those letters and to my defence speech, I shall allude to it only very briefly here:

I hid the confidential and important collections, and particularly those about the Sufyan and the Risale-i Nur’s wonder-working, under the coal and fire-wood so that they might be published after my death or after the authorities had come to their senses and listened to the truth. Then, when feeling easy at this, some detectives and the assistant public prosecutor suddenly raided my house. They pulled out those secret and important treatises from under the wood then arrested me and sent me to Isparta Prison, although I was in bad health. While greatly upset and sad at the harm that had come to the Risale-i Nur, divine grace came to our aid. The authorities carefully and curiously began to read those important treatises which had been hidden, of which they were in much need, and the government offices became like Risale-i Nur study centres. Although they began to read with the idea of criticizing, they appreciated them. In Denizli even, although we were unaware of it, numerous people read the printed edition of Ayetü’l-Kübra (The Supreme Sign), officially and unofficially, and strengthened their belief. This reduced to nothing the calamity of prison we were suffering.

Later they took us to Denizli Prison and put me into solitary confinement in a stinking, cold, damp ward. I was most unhappy at my old age and illness and the difficulties visited on my friends because of me. I was feeling most distressed at the confiscations of the Risale-i Nur and the cessation in its activities when divine grace suddenly came to my aid. It transformed that huge prison into a Risale-i Nur medrese, proving it was a School of Joseph. The Risale-i Nur started to spread through the diamond pens of the heroes of the Medresetü’z-Zehra.1 The great hero of the Risale-i Nur even, in those severe conditions, wrote out more than twenty copies of The Fruits of Belief and the Defence Speeches Collection in the space of three or four months. The conquests began both within the prison and outside. It transformed our losses in that calamity into significant gains and our distress into joy. It once again showed the meaning of the verse,

But it is possible that you dislike a thing which is good for you. (2:216)

Then we were subject to severe criticisms because of the incorrect and superficial statements of the first experts’ committee, and the Education Minister’s savage attacks. A statement was published against us. Then just when according to some reports they were even trying to secure the execution of some of us, divine grace came to our assistance. Chiefly, while expecting a severely critical report from the Experts Committee in Ankara, they sent a commendatory one. And although they found less than ten errors in five chests of copies of the Risale-i Nur, we proved in court that the points they had shown to be errors were completely correct and that they themselves had been in error in the matters they said were wrong; we showed between five and ten errors and mistakes in their five-page report. And while awaiting severe reprisals in the face of The Fruits of Belief and Defenses Collection, which we had sent to seven government offices, and the entire Risale-i Nur which had been sent to the Ministry of Justice, and especially in return for the effective, stinging slaps dealt by the confidential treatises, they responded extremely leniently, and like the even consoling letter sent to us by the Prime Minister, they were most conciliatory and did not attack us. This proved decisively that as a miracle of divine grace, the truths of the Risale-i Nur had defeated them, making them study its treatises as though it were a guide. It made those broad circles into a sort of study circle and saved the belief of numerous hesitating and bewildered people, causing us spiritual joy and profit far exceeding our distress.

Then our hidden enemies poisoned me; and the late Hafiz Ali, the martyr hero of the Risale-i Nur, went to hospital instead of me, travelled to the Intermediate Realm in my place, and made us weep despairingly. Before this calamity, on many occasions I had insisted on the mountain at Kastamonu: *“My brothers, don’t give meat to the horse and grass to the lion!” That is to say: “Don’t give all the treatises to everyone, lest they use them to attack us.”* Although Haf›z Ali (May God have mercy on him) was around seven days away on foot, as though he heard with his spiritual telephone, that same time he was writing to me: *“Yes, Ustad, it is a wonder of the Risale-i Nur that horses should not be given meat, nor lions, grass. Rather, since horses should be given hay, and lions meat, he gave that lion-like Hoja the treatise on sincerity.”* I received his letter seven days later. We worked it out, and at the same time I was shouting it out on the mountain, he was writing the strange words in his letter.

Thus, just at the time that hero of the Risale-i Nur died, and we were being pressurized by the secret dissemblers who were trying to have us punished through their intrigues against us, and we were anxious that I would be sent to hospital on official orders because I was ill from poison, divine grace came to our assistance. Thanks to the sincere prayers of my blessed brothers the danger to my life from the poison passed; and according to powerful signs our martyr was occupied in his grave with the Risale-i Nur, and replied with the Risale-i Nur to the questioning angels; and the Denizli hero, Hasan Feyzi (May God have mercy on him), who would work according to Hafız Ali’s system, and his friends were secretly serving the Risale-i Nur effectively; and because the other prisoners were being reformed by the Risale-i Nur, even our enemies supported our being released from prison; and like the Companions of the Cave, the Risale-i Nur students turned that place of ordeal into an ascetic’s cave of olden times; all this, together with their endeavours in writing out and disseminating the Risale-i Nur with easy hearts, proved that divine grace had come to our aid.

It also occurred to my heart that since a great interpreter of the law like Imam A‘zam suffered imprisonment; and a supreme mujahid like Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal was severely tortured in prison for the sake of a single matter of the Qur’an and endured it in perfect patience, yet not remain silent about the matter in question; and numerous religious leaders and scholars were completely patient and unshaken, offering thanks, despite suffering torments far greater than yours; for sure you are obliged to offer endless thanks for the very few difficulties you suffer, although the reward you receive is great for those many truths of the Qur’an. Yes, I shall describe briefly a manifestation of divine grace in the midst of man’s wrongful tyranny:

When I was twenty years old I used to say repeatedly: *“Towards the end of my life I shall withdraw from the life of society into a cave or onto a mountain like the people of olden times who abandoned the world and withdrew into caves.”* Then when in the Great War I was being held as a prisoner in the north-east, I took this decision: *“After this I shall spend my life in caves. I shall slip away from political and social life. Enough now of mixing in them.”* At that point both dominical grace and the justice of divine determining were manifested. It transformed the caves I had imagined into prisons, places of seclusion, loneliness in places of ordeal and solitary confinement in a way far better than my decision and wish, compassionately for my old age. It bestowed on me Schools of Joseph and places of solitary confinement where my time would not be wasted that were far superior to the mountain caves of ascetics and recluses. It gave both the benefits pertaining to the hereafter of the cave, and strenuous service of the truths of belief and the Qur’an. I had even determined to show myself guilty of some crime and remain in prison after my friends had been released. Solitaries like Husrev and Feyzi would have remained with me, and on some pretext I would have remained in the solitary confinement ward so as not to meet with people and waste my time on unnecessary conversation and egotistical artificiality. But then divine determining and our fate sent us to another place of ordeal. Out of compassion for my old age and in order to make us work harder in the service of belief, duties were given us outside our will and power in this third School of Joseph, in accordance with the verse, *“But it is possible that you dislike a thing which is good for you,”* and the saying: *“Good lies in what God chooses.”*

Yes, there are three instances of wisdom and important benefits in respect of the service of the Risale-i Nur in divine grace turning – out of compassion for my old age – the caves of my youth, when I had no powerful, hidden enemies, into the solitary confinement of prison:

First Instance of Wisdom and Benefit: It is only in the School of Joseph that the Risale-i Nur students can gather together without harm. Outside it is expensive and causes suspicion if they meet together. Some who came to visit me would spend forty or fifty liras, then see me for only twenty minutes or not at all, and would have to return. I would have willingly chosen the hardship of prison to be closer to some of my brothers. This means that for us prison is a bounty and instance of mercy.

Second Instance of Wisdom and Benefit: The service to belief at this time through the Risale-i Nur has to be through advertising it everywhere and attracting the attention of those in need. Attention is drawn to the Risale-i Nur by our imprisonment; it is like an advertisement. The most stubborn or most needy find it and save their belief; their obduracy is broken and they are saved from danger, and the Risale-i Nur’s study-circle is widened.

Third Instance of Wisdom and Benefit: The Risale-i Nur students who are sent to prison learn from one another’s conduct, qualities, sincerity, and self-sacrifice, and they no longer seek worldly benefits in their service. Yes, since in the School of Joseph they have seen with their own eyes the ten and perhaps a hundred benefits gained for every hardship and difficulty, and the good results, and the extensive and sincere service to belief, they are successful in attaining pure sincerity and no longer lower themselves by seeking minor, personal benefits.

A subtle but sad, yet at the same time agreeable, point concerning these places of ordeal that concerns myself only is this: I observe the same situation here that I saw in the old medreses in my native region in my youth. For traditionally in the eastern provinces, some of the medrese students’ needs were met from outside, and in some medreses their food was cooked in the medrese. There were other ways they resembled this place of ordeal. As I watch the prison here, I feel a pleasurable regret and longing, and travel in my imagination to those enjoyable times of youth, and forget the difficulties of old age.

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1. From the 26th Flash [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. That is to say, although with all its strength my heart wanted my body to be immortal, divine wisdom necessitated its destruction. I was afflicted with an incurable ill for which even Luqman the Wise could find no solution. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Musnad, v, 266; Wali al-Din Tabrizi, Mishkat al-Masabih, iii, 122; Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawzi, Zad al-Ma‘ad (tahqiq: al-Arnavud) i, 43-4. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. The ease of reporting a definite matter and the difficulty in denying it may be seen in the following comparison: if one person says: “There is a wondrous garden on earth whose trees produce fruits which are cans of milk,” and another says: “There isn’t,” the one claiming it only has to point out where it is or some of its fruits in order to easily prove it. Whereas the one denying can only prove his denial by seeing and showing the whole face of the earth. In just the same way, even if one disregards the hundreds of thousands of signs, fruits, and marks of Paradise which those who give news of it have indicated, the testimony of two truthful witnesses to its certain existence is sufficient; while the one who denies it can only prove his denial after observing the infinite universe and infinite, unending time, and seeing it and investigating it exhaustively; only then can he demonstrate its non-existence. And so, my elderly brothers, you may understand just how powerful is belief in the hereafter. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. al-‘Ajluni, Kashf al-Khafa’, No: 1099; al-Suyuti, al-Durar al-Muntathira, 97; Isfahani, Hilyat al-Awliya’, vi, 388; al-Munawi, Fayd al-Qadir, iii, 368, No: 3662. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. al-‘Ajluni, Kashf al-Khafa’, ii, 163; al-Munawi, Fayd al-Qadir, v, 344, No: 7523; al-Bayhaqi, al-Sunan al-Kubra, iii, 345. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Abdurrahman was the son of Bediuzzaman’s elder brother, ‘Abdullah. He was born in Nurs in 1903, and was Bediuzzaman’s spiritual son, student, and assistant. He joined his uncle in Istanbul after the First World War, and published a short biography of him at that time. He died in Ankara in 1928, where he is buried. (Tr.) [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. That is, “Should all the things you call upon and worship other than God were to gather together, they could not create so much as a fly.” [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Medrese: school where religious sciences were taught. (Tr.) [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. al-‘Ajluni, Kashf al-Khafa’, ii, 128, No: 2041; al-Munawi, Fayd al-Qadir, v, 483, No: 8053; al- Haythami, Majma‘ al-Zawa’id, i, 94 [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Like earthquake, storm, tempest, plague, and fire. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. The name of the university Bediuzzaman strove throughout his life to found in eastern Anatolia, where the religious sciences would be taught together with the modern sciences. He received funds from Sultan Reşad and laid the foundations on the shores of Lake Van in 1911, but it was not completed due to the outbreak of World War I. With the spread of the Risale-i Nur in the first decades of the republic, Risale-i Nur Medreses, or places where the Risale-i Nur was studied or copies of it were written, opened throughout Turkey. Bediuzzaman then called the Risale-i Nur students, students of the Medresetü’z-Zehra. (Tr.) [↑](#footnote-ref-12)