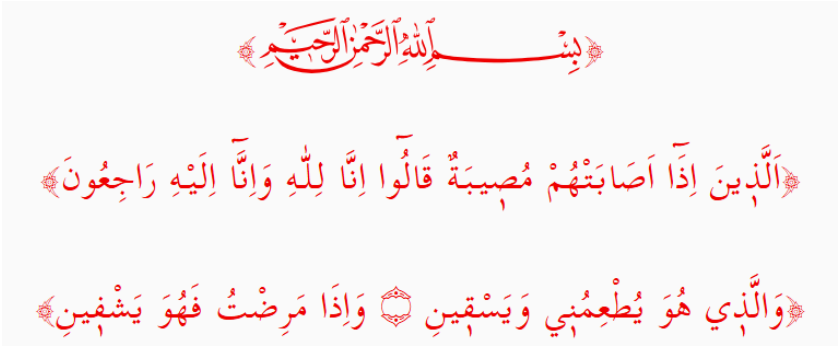
MESSAGE for the SICK

The Twenty-Fifth Flash

[This treatise consists of twenty-five remedies. It was written as a salve, a solace, and a prescription for the sick, and in order to visit them and wish them a speedy recovery.]

Warning and Apology

This immaterial prescription was written with a speed greater than all my other writings, (*) and since time could not be found to correct and study it, unlike all the others it was read only once, and that at great speed like its composition. That is to say, it has remained in the disordered state of a first draft. I did not consider it necessary to go over carefully the things which had occurred to me in a natural manner, lest they be spoilt by arranging them and paying them undue attention. Readers and especially the sick should not feel upset and offended at any disagreeable expressions or harsh words and phrases; let them rather pray for me.



In the Name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate.

*Those who say when afflicted by calamity: "To Allah do we belong and to Him is our return." (2:156) * Who gives me food and drink * And when I am ill it is He Who cures me. (26:79-80)*

In this Flash, we describe briefly twenty-five remedies which may offer true consolation and a beneficial cure for the sick and those struck by disaster, who form one tenth of mankind.

FIRST REMEDY

Unhappy sick person! Do not be anxious, have patience! Your illness is not a malady for you; it is a sort of cure. For life departs like capital; if it yields no fruits, it is wasted; and if it passes in ease and heedlessness, it passes swiftly. Illness makes that capital of yours yield huge profits. Moreover, it does not allow your life to pass quickly, it restrains it and lengthens it, so that it will depart after yielding its fruits. An indication that your life is lengthened through illness is the following much repeated proverb: "The times of calamity are long, the times of happiness, most brief."

(*) *This treatise was written in four and a half hours.*

Signed, Rüştü, Re'fet, Hüsrev, Said

SECOND REMEDY

O ill person who lacks patience! Be patient, indeed, offer thanks! Your illness may transform each of the minutes of your life into the equivalent of an hour's worship. For worship is of two kinds. One is positive like the well-known worship of supplication and the five daily prayers. The other are negative forms of worship like illness and calamities. By means of these, those afflicted realize their impotence and weakness; they beseech their **All-Compassionate Creator** and take refuge in Him; they manifest worship which is sincere and without hypocrisy. Yes, there is a sound narration stating that a life passed in illness is counted as worship for the believer -on condition he does not complain about Allah. (*) It is even established by sound narrations and by those who uncover the realities of creation that one minute's illness of some people who are completely patient and thankful becomes the equivalent of an hour's worship and a minute's illness of certain perfected men the equivalent of a day's worship. So you should not complain about an illness which as though transforms one minute of your life into a thousand minutes and gains for you long life; you should offer thanks.

THIRD REMEDY

Impatient sick person! The fact that those who come to this world continuously depart, and the young grow old, and man perpetually revolves amid death and separation testifies that he did not come to this world to enjoy himself and receive pleasure.

Moreover, while man is the most perfect, the most elevated, of living beings and the best endowed in regard to members and faculties, and indeed is like the monarach of animate beings, he dwells on past pleasures and future pains, and so passes a grievous, troublesome life, lower than the animals. This means that man did not come to this world to live in a fine manner and pass his life in ease and pleasure. Rather, he possesses vast capital, and he came here to work and do trade for an eternal, everlasting life.

The capital given to man is his lifetime. Had there been no illness, good health and well-being would have caused heedlessness, for they show him the world to be pleasant and make the hereafter forgotten. They do not want death and the grave to be thought of; they cause the capital of life to be wasted on trifles. Whereas illness suddenly opens the eyes, it says to the body: "You are not immortal. You have not been left to your own devices. You have a duty. Give up your pride, think of the One who created you. Know that you will enter the grave, so prepare yourself for it!" From this point of view, illness is an admonishing guide and adviser that never deceives. It should not be complained about in this respect, indeed, it should be thanked for. And if it is too severe, patience should be sought to endure it.

FOURTH REMEDY

Plaintive ill person! You have no right to complain; what is due to you is to offer thanks and be patient. For your body and members and faculties are not your property. You did not make them, nor did you buy them from other workshops. That means they are someone else's property, and their owner has disposal over his property as he wishes.

(*) *al-Albânî, Sahîh Jâmi' al-Saghîr, 256. See also, al-Suyûtî, al-Fath al-Kabîr, ii, 148.*

As is related in the Twenty-Sixth Word, an extremely wealthy and skilful craftsman, for example, employs a poor man as a model in order to show off his fine art and considerable wealth. In return for a wage, for a brief hour he clothes the poor man in a bejewelled and skilfully wrought garment. He works it on him and gives it various states. In order to display the extraordinary varieties of his art, he cuts the garment, alters it, and lengthens and shortens it. Does the poor wage-earner have the right to say to that person: "You are causing me trouble, you are causing me distress with the form you have given it, making me bow down and stand up?" Has he the right to tell him that he is spoiling his fine appearance by trimming and shortening the garment which makes him beautiful? Can he tell him he is being unkind and unfair?

O sick person! Just like in this comparison, in order to display the garment of your body with which He has clothed you, bejewelled with luminous faculties like the eye, the ear, the reason, and the heart, and the embroideries of His most beautiful names, **the All-Glorious Maker** makes you revolve amid numerous states and changes you in many situations. Just as you learn of His name of **Provider** through hunger, so come to know His name of **Healer** through your illness. Since suffering and calamities show the decrees of some of His names, many instances of good are to be found within those flashes of wisdom and rays of mercy. If the veil of illness, which you fear and loathe, were to be lifted, behind it you would find many agreeable and beautiful meanings.

FIFTH REMEDY

O you who is afflicted with illness! Through experience, I have formed the opinion at this time that for some people sickness is a divine bounty, a gift of **the Most Merciful**. Although I was not worthy of it, over the past eight or nine years a number of young people have come to me in connection with their illnesses, to request my prayers. I have noticed that all of them have begun to think of the hereafter more than other young people. They lack the drunkenness of youth, and have renounced to an extent animal desires and heedlessness. So I consider them and then remind them that their illnesses are a divine bounty within bearable limits. I tell them: "Brother! I am not opposed to this illness of yours. I don't feel sorry for you because of it that I should pray for you. Try to be patient until the illness awakens you completely, and once it has performed its duty, **the Compassionate Creator** will restore you to health, Allah willing."

I also tell them: "Owing to the calamity of good health, some of your fellows become neglectful, give up the five daily prayers, do not think of the grave, and forget **Allah Almighty**. The superficial pleasure of a brief hour's worldly life causes them to shake and damage eternal life, and even to destroy it. Whereas because of your illness, you see the grave, which you will in any event enter, and the dwellings of the hereafter beyond it, and you act accordingly. So for you, illness is good health, while for some of your peers good health is a sickness."

SIXTH REMEDY

O sick person who complains about his suffering! I say to you: think of your past life and remember the pleasurable, happy days and the distressing, troublesome times, and you will surely exclaim either "Oh!" or "Ah!" That is, your heart and tongue will either say "All praise and thanks be to Allah!" *(Alhamdulillah)*, or "Alas and alack!" Note carefully, what makes you exclaim "Praise and thanks be to Allah!" is thinking of the pains and calamities that have befallen you; they induce a sort of pleasure so that your heart offers thanks, for the passing of pain is a pleasure. With the passing of

pains and calamities, a legacy of pleasure is left in the spirit, which on being aroused by thinking, pours forth from the spirit in thanks. What makes you exclaim "Alas and alack!" are the pleasurable and happy times you have experienced in the past, which with their passing leave a legacy in your spirit of constant pain. Whenever you think of them, the pain is again stimulated, causing regret and sorrow to pour forth.

Since one day's illicit pleasure sometimes causes a year's suffering in the spirit, and with the pain of a fleeting day's illness causes many days' pleasure and recompense in addition to the pleasure at being relieved at its passing, think of the result of this temporary illness with which you are now afflicted, and of the merits of its inner face. Say: "All is from Allah! This too will pass!", and offer thanks instead of complaining.

SIXTH REMEDY (*)

O brother who thinks of the pleasures of this world and suffers distress at illness! If this world were everlasting, and if on our way there were no death, and if the winds of separation and decease did not blow, and if there were no winters of the spirit in the calamitous and stormy future, I would have pitied you together with you. But since one day the world will bid us to leave it and will close its ears to our cries, we must forego our love of it now through the warnings of these illnesses, before it drives us out. We must try to abandon it in our hearts before it abandons us.

Yes, illness utters this warning to us: "Your body is not composed of stone and iron, but of various materials which are ever disposed to parting. Leave off your pride, perceive your impotence, recognize your Owner, know your duties, learn why you came to this world!" It declares this secretly in the heart's ear.

Moreover, since the pleasures and enjoyment of this world do not continue, and particularly if they are illicit they are both fleeting, and full of pain, and sinful, do not weep on the pretext of illness because you have lost those pleasures. On the contrary, think of the aspects of worship and reward in the hereafter to be found in illness, and try to receive pleasure from those.

SEVENTH REMEDY

O sick person who has lost the pleasures of health! Your illness does not spoil the pleasure of divine bounties, on the contrary, it causes them to be experienced and increases them. For if something is continuous, it loses its effect. The people of reality even say that "Things are known through their opposites." For example, if there were no darkness, light would not be known and would produce no pleasure. If there were no cold, heat could not be comprehended and would not be agreeable. If there were no hunger, food would not be enjoyable. If there were no thirst of the stomach, there would be no pleasure in drinking water. If there were no sickness, no pleasure would be had from good health.

(*) *This Flash occurred to me in a natural manner, and two remedies have been included in the Sixth Remedy. We have left it thus in order not to spoil the naturalness; indeed, we did not change it thinking there may be some mystery contained in it.*

The All-Wise Creator's decking out man with truly numerous members and faculties, to the extent that he may experience and recognize the innumerable varieties of bounties in the universe, shows that He wants to make him aware of every sort of His bounty and to acquaint him with them and to impel him to offer constant thanks. Since this is so, He will give illness, sickness, and suffering, the same as He bestows good health and well-being. I ask you: If you had not suffered this illness in your head or in your hand or stomach, would you have perceived the pleasurable and enjoyable divine bounty of the good health of your head, hand or stomach, and offered thanks? For sure, you would not have even thought of it, let alone offering thanks for it! You would have unconsciously spent that good health on heedlessness, and perhaps even on dissipation.

EIGHTH REMEDY

O sick person who thinks of the hereafter! Sickness washes away the dirt of sins like soap, and cleanses. It is established in a sound Hadith that illnesses are atonement for sins. And in another Hadith, it says: "As ripe fruits fall on their tree being shaken, so the sins of a believer fall away on his shaking with illness." (*)

Sins are the chronic illnesses of eternal life, and in this worldly life they are sicknesses of the heart, conscience, and spirit. If you are patient and do not complain, you will be saved through this temporary sickness from numerous perpetual sicknesses. If you do not think of your sins, or do not know the hereafter, or do not recognize Allah, you suffer from an illness so fearsome it is a million times worse than your present minor illnesses. Cry out at that, for all the beings in the world are connected with your heart, spirit, and soul. Those connections are continuously severed by death and separation, opening up innumerable wounds. Particularly since you do not know the hereafter and imagine death to be eternal non-existence, as though lacerated and bruised, your being suffers illness to the extent of the world. Thus, the first thing you have to do is to search for the cure of belief, which is the certain healing remedy for the innumerable illnesses afflicting that infinitely wounded and sick, extensive immaterial being of yours; you have to correct your beliefs. The shortest way of finding such a cure is to recognize the power and mercy of **the All-Powerful One of Glory** by means of the window of your weakness and impotence shown you behind the curtain of heedlessness, rent by your physical illness.

Yes, one who does not recognize Allah is afflicted by a world-full of tribulations. While the world of one who does recognize Him is full of light and spiritual happiness; he perceives these in accordance with the strength of his belief. The suffering resulting from insignificant physical illnesses is dissolved by the immaterial joy, healing, and pleasure that arise from belief; the suffering melts away.

(*) *Bukhârî, Mardâ, 1, 2, 13, 16; Muslim, Birr, 45; Dârimî, Riqâq, 57; Musnad, i, 371, 441; ii, 303, 335; iii, 4, 18, 38, 48, 61, 81.*

NINTH REMEDY

O sick person who recognizes his **Creator**! Illness gives rise to pain, fear, and anxiety because it sometimes leads to death. Since superficially and to the heedless death is terrifying, illnesses which may lead to it cause fear and apprehension.

So know firstly and believe firmly that the appointed hour is determined and does not change. Those weeping beside the grievously sick and those in perfect health have died, while the grievously sick have been cured and lived.

Secondly: Death is not terrifying as it appears to be superficially. Through the light afforded by the **All-Wise Qur'an**, in many parts of the Risale-i Nur we have proved in completely certain and indubitable fashion that for believers death is to be discharged from the burdensome duties of life. For them it is a rest from worship, which forms the instruction and training in the arena of trial of this world. It is also a means of their rejoining friends and relations, ninety-nine out of a hundred of whom have already departed for the next world. It is a means of entering their true homeland and eternal abodes of happiness. It is also an invitation to the gardens of Paradise from the dungeon of this world. And it is the time they receive their wage from the munificence of **the Most Compassionate Creator** in return for service rendered to Him. Since the reality of death is this, it should be regarded not as terrifying, but on the contrary as the introduction to mercy and happiness.

Moreover, some of the people of Allah have feared death, not out of terror at it but because they hoped to gain additional merit by performing more good works with the duties of life continuing. Yes, for the people of belief, death is the door to divine mercy, while for the people of misguidance, it is the pit of everlasting darkness.

TENTH REMEDY

O sick person who worries unnecessarily! You worry at the severity of your illness and that worry exacerbates it. If you want your illness to be less severe, try not to worry. That is, think of the benefits of your illness, the recompense for it, and that it will pass quickly; it will remove the worry and cut the illness at the root.

In fact, worry doubles the illness, for it causes an immaterial illness of the heart underlying the physical illness; the physical illness subsists through that and persists. If the worry ceases through submission, contentment, and comprehension of the reason for the illness, a large part of the illness is eradicated; it becomes less severe and in part disappears. Sometimes a minor physical illness increases tenfold just through anxiety. If the anxiety ceases, nine tenths of the illness disappears.

Worry increases illness. It also an accusation against divine wisdom and a criticism of divine mercy and complaint against **the Compassionate Creator**. For this reason, the person who worries receives a rebuff and it increases his illness contrary to his intentions. Yes, just as thanks increases bounty, so complaint increases illness and tribulations.

Furthermore, worry is itself an illness. Its cure is to recognize the wisdom in illness and its purpose. Since you have now learnt these, apply the salve to your worry and find relief! Say "Ah!" instead of "Oh!", and "All praise be to Allah for every situation" instead of sighing and lamenting.

ELEVENTH REMEDY

O my impatient sick brother! Although illness causes you an immediate suffering, your illness through the past until today produces a spiritual pleasure and happiness arising from the reward received for enduring it. From today forward, from this hour even, the illness does not exist, and certainly no pain is suffered from non-being. And if there is no pain, there can be no distress. You become impatient because you imagine things wrongly. For both the physical illness prior to today, and its pain, have departed; all that remains are its reward and the pleasure at its passing. This should afford you profit and happiness, so to think of past days and feel grieved and impatient is crazy. Future days have not yet arrived. To dwell on them now, and to feel upset and impatient by imagining a day that does not exist and an illness that does not exist and distress that does not exist, is to impart existence to three degrees of non-existence -if that is not crazy, what is? If the previous hour was one of illness, it produces joy; and since the time subsequent to the present hour is non-existent, and both the illness and the distress are non-existent, do not scatter the power of patience given you by **Almighty Allah** to right and left, but muster it in the face of pain of the present hour; say: "O **Most Patient One**!" *(Yâ Sabûr)* and withstand it.

TWELFTH REMEDY

O sick person who due to illness cannot perform his worship and invocations and feels grief at the deprivation! Know that it is stated in a Hadith: "A pious believer who due to illness cannot perform his customary invocations, receives a reward equal to them." (*) If an ill person performs his obligatory worship as far as it is possible with patience and relying on Allah, the illness takes the place of Sunna worship during that time of severe illness - and in sincere form.

Moreover, illness makes the person understand his impotence and weakness; it causes him to offer supplication both verbally and through the tongue of his impotence and weakness. For **Almighty Allah** bestowed on man a boundless impotence and infinite weakness so that he would perpetually seek refuge at the divine court and beseech and supplicate. The verse,

﴿قُلْ مَا يَعْبَؤُا بِكُمْ رَبِّي لَوْلَا دُعَاؤُكُمْ﴾

Say: Your Sustainer would not concern Himself with you if it was not for your prayers; (25:77)

has the meaning, "what importance would you have if you did not offer prayer and supplication?" According to this, sincere prayer and supplication are the reason for man's creation and for his value. Since illness is one cause of this, from this point of view it should not be complained about but thanks be offered to Allah for it, and the tap of supplication which illness opens should not be closed by regaining health.

(*) *Bukhârî, Jihâd, 134; Musnad, iv, 410, 418.*

THIRTEENTH REMEDY

O unhappy person who complains at illness! For some people illness is a rich treasury, a precious divine gift. Every sick person can think of his illness in this way.

The appointed hour is not known: in order to deliver man from absolute despair and absolute heedlessness, and to hold him between hope and fear and so preserve both this world and the hereafter, in His wisdom **Almighty Allah** has concealed the appointed hour; it may come at any time. If it captures man in heedlessness, it may cause grievous harm to eternal life. Illness, however, dispels the heedlessness; it makes a person think of the hereafter; it recalls death, so he may prepare himself. Some illnesses are so profitable as to gain for a person in twenty days a rank they could not otherwise have risen to in twenty years.

For instance, among my friends were two youths, may Allah have mercy on them. One was Sabri from the village of Ilema, the other Vezirzâde Mustafa from Islâmköy. I used to note with amazement that although these two could not write they were among the foremost in regard to sincerity and the service of belief. I did not know the reason for this. After their deaths I understood that each had suffered from a serious illness. Due to the guidance of the illness, they had considerable fear of Allah, performed highly valuable service, and attained a state beneficial to the hereafter, unlike other youths who heedlessly gave up obligatory worship. Allah willing, the distress of two years' illness allowed them to attain the happiness of millions of years of eternal life. I understand now that the prayers I sometimes offered for their health were maledictions in respect of this world. Allah willing, they were accepted for their well-being in the hereafter.

Thus, according to my belief, the two gained profit equal to that which may be gained through ten years' fear of Allah. If like some young people, they had relied on their youth and good health and thrown themselves into heedlessness and vice, and stalking them, death had grabbed them right in the midst of the filth of their sins, they would have made their graves into nests of scorpions and snakes, instead of that treasury of lights.

Since illnesses contain such benefits, they should be not complained about but borne with patience, relying on Allah, indeed, thanking Allah and having confidence in His mercy.

FOURTEENTH REMEDY

O sick person whose eyes have developed cataracts! If you knew what a light and spiritual eye is to be found beneath the cataract that may cover a believer's eyes, you would exclaim: "A hundred thousand thanks to my **Compassionate Sustainer**!" I shall recount an incident to explain this salve. It is as follows:

One time, the aunt of Süleyman from Barla, who served me for eight years with complete loyalty and willingness, became blind. Owing to her good opinion of me, which was a hundred times better than I deserved, the righteous woman caught me by the door of the mosque and asked me to pray for her sight to be restored. So I made the blessed woman's righteousness the intercessor for my supplication, and beseeching **Almighty Allah**, I prayed: "O Lord! Restore her sight out of respect for her righteousness." Two days later, an oculist from Burdur came and removed the cataract. Forty days later she again lost her sight. I was most upset and prayed fervently for her. Allah willing, the prayer was accepted for her life in the hereafter, otherwise that prayer of mine would have been a mistaken

malediction for her. For forty days had remained till her death; forty days later she died - May Allah have mercy on her.

Thus, rather than gazing sorrowfully at the gardens of Barla with the eye of old age, she profited in her grave by being able to gaze for forty thousand days on the gardens of Paradise. For her belief was strong and she was completely righteous.

Yes, if a believer loses his sight and enters the grave blind, in accordance with his degree he may gaze on the world of light to an extent much greater than other dead in their graves. Just as we see many things in this world that blind believers do not see, if the blind depart with belief, they see to a greater extent than other dead in their graves. They can behold the gardens of Paradise and watch them like the cinema as though looking through the most powerful telescopes, according to their degree.

Thus, through thanks and patience you may find beneath the veil on your present eye an eye which is thus light-filled, and with which while beneath the earth you may see and observe Paradise above the skies. That which will raise the veil from your eye, the eye doctor that will allow you to look with that eye, is **the All-Wise Qur'an**.

FIFTEENTH REMEDY

O sick person who sighs and laments! Do not look at the outward aspect of illness and sigh, consider its meaning and be pleased. If in meaning illness had not been good, **the All-Compassionate Creator** would not have given it to the servants He loves most. For there is a Hadith

اَشَدُّ النَّاسِ بَلَاءً اَلْاَنْبِيَاءُ ثُمَّ الْاَوْلِيَاءُ ، اَلْاَمْثَلُ فَالْاَمْثَلُ

the meaning of which is, "Those afflicted with the severest trials are the prophets, then the saints (awliya) and those like them." (*) That is, "Those most afflicted with tribulations and difficulties are the best of men, the most perfect." Foremost the Prophet Job (Peace be upon him) and the other prophets, then the saints, then the righteous, have regarded the illnesses they have suffered as sincere worship, as gifts of the Most Merciful; they have offered thanks in patience. They have seen them as surgical operations performed by the All-Compassionate Creator's mercy. O you who cries out and laments! If you want to join this luminous caravan, offer thanks in patience. For if you complain, they will not accept you. You will fall into the pits of the people of misguidance, and travel a dark road.

(*) *al-Munâwî, Fayd al-Qadîr, i, 519, no: 1056; al-Hâkim, al-Mustadrak, iii, 343; Bukhârî, Mardâ, 3; Tirmidhî, Zuhd, 57; Ibn Mâja, Fitan, 23; Dârimî, Riqâq, 67; Musnad, i, 172, 174, 180, 185; vi, 369.*

Yes, there are some illnesses which if they lead to death, are a sort of martyrdom; they result in a similar degree of sainthood. For example, people become martyrs who die from the illnesses accompanying childbirth (*) and pains of the abdomen, and by drowning, burning, and plague. There are also many blessed illnesses which gain the degree of sainthood for those who die from them. Moreover, since illness lessens love of the world and attachment to it, it lightens parting from the world through death, which for the worldly is extremely grievous and painful, and it sometimes even makes it desirable.

SIXTEENTH REMEDY

O sick person who complains at his distress! Illness prompts respect and compassion, which are most important and good in human social life. For it saves man from self-sufficiency, which drives him to unsociableness and unkindness. For according to the meaning of the verse,

﴿اِنَّ الْاِنْسَانَ لَيَطْغٰى ۝ اَنْ رَاٰهُ اسْتَغْنٰى﴾

*Indeed man transgresses all bounds * In that he looks upon himself as self-sufficient, (96:6-7)*

an evil-commanding soul which feels self-sufficient due to good health and well-being, does not feel respect towards his brothers in many instances, who are deserving of it. And he does not feel compassion towards the sick and those smitten by disaster, although they deserve kindness and pity. Whenever he is ill, he understands his own powerlessness and want and he has respect towards his brothers who are worthy of it. He feels respect towards his believing brothers who visit him or assist him. He feels human kindness, which arises from fellow-feeling, and compassion for those struck by disaster, a most important Islamic characteristic. And comparing them to himself, he pities them in the true meaning of the word and feels compassion for them. He does what he can to help them, and at the very least prays for them and goes to visit them to ask them how they are, which is Sunna according to the Shari'a, and thus earns reward.

(*) *The period this martyrdom may be won through illness is around the forty days of 'lying-in.'*

SEVENTEENTH REMEDY

O sick person who complains at not being able to perform good works due to illness! Offer thanks! It is illness that opens to you the door of the sincerest of good works. In addition to continuously gaining reward for the sick person and for those who look after him for Allah's sake, illness is a most important means for the acceptance of supplications.

Indeed, there is significant reward for believers looking after the sick. Inquiring after their health and visiting the sick - on condition it does not tax them - is Sunna (1) and also atonement for sins. There is an Hadith which says, "Receive the prayers of the sick, for they are acceptable." (2)

To look after the sick, especially if they are relations, or parents in particular, is important worship, yielding significant reward. To please a sick person's heart and console him, is a sort of significant almsgiving. Fortunate is the person who pleases the easily touched hearts of father and mother at a time of illness and receives their prayer. Even the angels applaud, exclaiming: "Ma'shAllah! BarekAllah!" before loyal scenes of those good offspring who respond with perfect respect and filial kindness at the time of their parents' illness showing the exaltedness of humanity - for they are the most worthy of respect in the life of society.

Yes, pleasures are experienced at the time of illness which arise from the kindness, pity, and compassion of those around, and are most pleasant and agreeable and reduce the pains of illness to nothing. The acceptability of the prayers of the sick is an important matter. For the past thirty or forty years, I myself have prayed to be cured from the illness of lumbago from which I suffer. However, I understood that the illness had been given for prayer. Since prayer cannot be removed by prayer; that is, since prayer cannot remove itself, I understood that the results of prayer pertain to the hereafter, (3) and that it is a sort of worship, for through illness one understands one's impotence and seeks refuge at the divine court. Therefore, although for thirty years I have offered supplications to be healed and apparently my prayer has not been accepted, it has not occurred to me to give it up. For illness is the time for supplication. To be cured is not the result of the supplication. If **the All-Wise and Compassionate One** bestows healing, He bestows it out of His abundant grace. Furthermore, if supplications are not accepted in the form we wish, it should not be said that they have not been accepted. **The All-Wise Creator** knows better than us; He gives whatever is in our interests. Sometimes he directs our prayers for this world towards the hereafter, and accepts them in that way. In any event, a supplication that acquires sincerity due to illness and arises from weakness, impotence, humility and need, is very close to being acceptable. Illness makes supplication sincere. Both the sick who are religious, and believers who look after the sick, should take advantage of this supplication.

(1) *al-Munâwî, Fayd al-Qadîr, ii, 45, No: 1285.*
(2) *Ibn Mâja, Janâ'iz, 1; Daylamî, Musnad al-Firdaws, i, 280.*
(3) *Yes, while certain illnesses are the reason for the existence of supplication, if the supplication is the cause of the illness' non-existence, the existence of the supplication would be the cause of its own non-existence, and this could not be the case.*

EIGHTEENTH REMEDY

O sick person who gives up offering thanks and takes up complaining! Complaint arises from a right, and none of your rights have been lost that you should complain. Indeed, there are numerous thanks which are an obligation for you, a right over you, and these you have not performed. Without **Almighty Allah** giving you the right, you are complaining as though demanding rights in a manner which is not rightful. You cannot look at others superior to you in degree who are healthy, and complain. You are rather charged with looking at the sick who from the point of view of health are at a degree lower than yourself, and should offer thanks. If your hand is broken, look at theirs, which is severed. If you have only one eye, look at the blind, who lack both eyes, and offer thanks to Allah!

For sure, no one has the right to look to those superior to him in regard to bounties and complain. Concerning tribulations, it is everyone's right to look to those above themselves in that regard, so that they should offer thanks. This mystery has been explained in a number of places in the Risale-i Nur with a comparison; a summary of it is as follows:

A person takes a wretched man to the top of a minaret. On every step he gives him a different gift, a different bounty. Right at the top he gives him the largest present. Although he wants thanks and gratitude in return for all those various gifts, the peevish man forgets the presents he has received on each of the stairs, or considers them to be of no importance, and offering no thanks, looks above him and starts to complain, saying, "If only the minaret had been higher, I could have climbed even further. Why isn't it as tall as that mountain over there or that other minaret?" What great ingratitude it would be if he begins to complain like this, what a wrong!

In just the same way, man comes into existence from nothing, not as a rock or a tree or an animal, but as a human being and a Muslim, and most of the time experiences good health and acquires a high level of bounties. Despite all this, to complain and display impatience because he is not worthy of some bounties, or because he loses them through wrong choices or abuse, or because he could not obtain them, and to criticize divine dominicality saying "What have I done that this has happened to me?", is a state of mind and spiritual sickness more calamitous than the physical one. Like fighting with a broken hand, complaint makes his illness worse. Sensible is the person who in accordance with the meaning of the verse,

لِكُلِّ مُصِيبَةٍ اِنَّا لِلّٰهِ وَاِنَّآ اِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ

Those who when struck by calamity say: To Allah do we belong, and to Allah is our return (2:156)

submits and is patient, so that the illness may complete its duty, then depart.

NINETEENTH REMEDY

As the attribute of **the Eternally Besought One**, "the most beautiful names" indicates, all **the All-Beauteous One of Glory**'s names are beautiful. Among beings, life is the most subtle, the most beautiful, and the most comprehensive mirror of **Eternal Besoughtedness**. The mirror to the beautiful is beautiful. The mirror that displays the virtues of beauty becomes beautiful. Just as whatever is done to the mirror by such beauty is good and beautiful, whatever befalls life too, in respect of reality, is

good. For it displays the beautiful impresses of the most beautiful names, which are good and beautiful.

Life becomes a deficient mirror if it passes monotonously with permanent health and well-being. In one respect, it suggests non-existence, non-being, and nothingness, and causes weariness. It reduces the life's value and transforms the pleasure of life into distress. For thinking he will pass his time quickly, out of boredom a person throws himself either into vice or into amusements. He becomes hostile to his valuable life and wants to kill it and make it pass quickly as though it were a prison sentence. But when it revolves in change and action and different states, life makes its value felt, and its importance and pleasure. Such a person does not want his life to pass quickly, even if it is in hardship and tribulation. He does not complain wearily, saying, "Alas! The sun hasn't set yet," or, "it is still nighttime."

Yes, ask a fine gentleman who is rich and idle and living in the lap of luxury, "How are you?" You are bound to hear a pathetic reply like: "The time never passes. Let's have a game of backgammon. Or let's find some amusement to pass the time." Or else you will hear complaints arising from worldly ambition, like: "I haven't got that; if only I had done such-and-such."

Then ask someone struck by disaster or a worker or poor man living in penury: "How are you?" If he is sensible, he will reply: "All thanks be to Allah, I am working. If only the evening did not come so quickly, I could have finished this work! Time passes so quickly, and so does life; they flash by. For sure things are hard for me, but that will pass too. Everything passes quickly." He in effect says how valuable life is and how regretful he is at its passing. That means he perceives the pleasure and value of life through hardship and labour. As for ease and health, they make life bitter and make one hope for its speedy passing.

My brother who is sick! Know that non-existence is the origin and leaven of calamities and evils, and even of sins, as is proved decisively and in detail in other parts of the Risale-i Nur. As for non-existence, it is evil, it is darkness. Monotonous states like ease, silence, tranquillity, and arrest are close to non-existence and nothingness, and therefore make felt the darkness of non-existence and cause distress. As for action and change, they are existence and make existence felt. And existence is pure good; it is light.

Since the reality is thus, your illness has been sent to your being as a guest to perform many duties such as purifying your valuable life, and strengthening it and making it progress, and inducing the other human faculties in your being to turn in assistance towards your sick member, and to display various of the **All-Wise Maker**'s names. Allah willing, it will carry out its duties quickly and depart, and will say to good health: "Come, and stay permanently in my place, and carry out your duties. This house is yours. Remain here in good health."

TWENTIETH REMEDY

O sick person who is searching for a remedy for his ills! Illness is of two sorts. One sort is real, the other, imaginary. As for the real sort, **the All-Wise and Glorious Healer** has stored up in His mighty pharmacy of the earth a cure for every illness. As for the cures, they require the illnesses. He has created a cure for every illness. It is licit to obtain medicines and use them as treatment, but one should know that their effect and the cure are from **Almighty Allah**. He both gives the ailment and provides the cure.

Following the recommendations of skilful, Allah-fearing doctors is an effective medicine. For most illnesses arise from abuses, lack of abstinence, wastefulness, mistakes, dissipation, and lack of care. A religious doctor will certainly give advice and instructions within the bounds of the lawful. He will forbid abuses and excesses, and give consolation. The sick person has confidence in his advice and consolation, and his illness lessens; it produces as easiness for him in place of distress.

But when it comes to imaginary illness, the most effective medicine is to give it no importance. The more importance is given to it, the more it grows and swells. If it is disregarded, it lessens and disperses. The more bees are upset the more they swarm around a person's head, but they disperse if no attention is paid to them. Similarly, the more importance one pays to a piece of string waving in front of one's eyes in the darkness and to the apprehension it causes one, the more it grows and makes one flee like a madman. While if one pays it no importance, one sees that it is an ordinary bit of string and not a snake, and laughs at one's fright and anxiety.

If hypochondria is chronic, it is transformed into reality. It is a serious illness afflicting the nervous and those given to imaginings; such people make mountains out of molehills and their morale is destroyed. Then if they encounter unkind 'half' doctors or unfair doctors, it further provokes their hypochondria. If they are rich, they lose their wealth, or they lose their wits, or their health.

TWENTY-FIRST REMEDY

My sick brother! Your illness is accompanied by physical pain. However, you are surrounded by a significant spiritual pleasure that will remove its effect. For if your father, mother, and relations are with you, their most pleasurable compassion which you have forgotten since childhood will be reawakened and you will see again the kind looks you received in childhood. In addition, friendships envelop you that had remained secret and hidden; these too look towards you with love through the attraction of illness. In the face of these, your physical pain is reduced to insignificance. Also, you have become a master of the masters since those whom you used to serve proudly now serve you kindly at the decree of illness. Moreover, you have attracted towards yourself the fellow-feeling and human kindness in people, and so have found numerous helpful friends and kind companions. And again, you have received the order from your illness to rest from many taxing duties and are taking a rest. For sure, in the face of these immaterial pleasures, your minor pain should drive you to thanks, not complaint.

TWENTY-SECOND REMEDY

My brother who suffers from a severe illness like apoplexy! Firstly I give you the good news that for believers apoplexy is considered blessed. A long time ago I used to hear this from holy men and I did not know the reason. Now, one reason for it occurs to me, as follows:

In order to attain union with **Almighty Allah**, be saved from the spiritual perils of this world, and to win eternal happiness, the people of Allah have chosen to follow two principles:

The First is contemplation of death. Thinking that both the world is transitory, and they themselves are temporary guests charged with duties, they work for eternal life in this way.

The Second: Through fasting, religious exercises and asceticism, they try to kill the evil-commanding soul and so be saved from its dangers and from the blind emotions.

And you, my brother who has lost the health of half his body! Without choosing it, you have been given these two principles, which are short and easy and the cause of happiness. Thus, the state of your being perpetually warns you of the fleeting nature of the world and that man is transient. The world can no longer drown you, nor heedlessness close your eyes. And for sure, the evil-commanding soul cannot deceive with lowly lust and animal appetites someone in the state of half a man; he is quickly saved from the trials of the soul.

Thus, through the mystery of belief in Allah and submission to Him and reliance on Him, a believer can benefit in a brief time from a severe illness like apoplexy, resembling the severe trials of the saints. A severe illness such as that thus becomes exceedingly cheap.

TWENTY-THIRD REMEDY

Unhappy ill person who is alone and a stranger! Even if your aloneness and exile together with your illness were to arouse sympathy towards you in the hardest hearts and attract kindness and compassion, could it be a substitute for your **All-Compassionate Creator**? For He presents Himself to us at the start of all the Qur'an's Suras with the attributes of **"the Merciful and the Compassionate,"** and with one flash of His compassion makes all mothers nurture their young with that wonderful tenderness, and with one manifestation of His mercy every spring fills the face of the earth with bounties. Eternal life in Paradise together with all its wonders is but a single manifestation of His mercy. Then surely your relation to Him through belief, your recognizing Him and beseeching Him through the tongue of impotence, arising from your illness and the affliction of your loneliness in exile, will attract the glance of His mercy towards you, which takes the place of everything. Since He exists and He looks to you, everything exists for you. Those who are truly alone and in exile are those who are not connected with Him through belief and submission, or attach no importance to that relation.

TWENTY-FOURTH REMEDY

O you who look after innocent sick children or the elderly, who resemble innocent children! You have before you important trade for the hereafter. So procure it through your enthusiasm and effort! It is established by the people of reality that the illnesses of innocent children are like training for their delicate bodies, and injections and dominical training to allow them to withstand in the future the upheavals of the world; that in addition to many instances of wisdom pertaining to the child's worldly life, instead of the atonement for sins in adults which looks to spiritual life and is the means to purifying life, illnesses are like injections ensuring the child's spiritual progress in the future or in the hereafter; and that the merits accruing from such illnesses pass to the book of good works of the parents, and particularly of the mother who through the mystery of compassion prefers the health of her child to her own health.

As for looking after the elderly, it is established in sound narrations and many historical events that together with receiving huge reward, to receive the prayers of the elderly and especially of parents, and to make happy their hearts and serve them loyally, leads to happiness in both this world and the next. And it is established by many events that a fortunate child who obeys to the letter his elderly parents will be treated similarly by his children, but if a wretched child wounds his parents he will be punished by means of many disasters in this world and in the hereafter. Yes, Islam requires that one looks after not only relatives who are elderly or innocents, but also elderly believers if one encounters

them - through the mystery of the true brotherhood of belief - and that one serves to one's utmost ability the venerable sick elderly if they are in need of it.

TWENTY-FIFTH REMEDY

My sick brothers! If you want a most beneficial and truly pleasurable sacred cure, strengthen and develop your belief! That is, make use of belief, that sacred cure, and of the medicine which arises from belief through repentance and seeking forgiveness, and the five daily prayers and worship.

You as though possess a sick immaterial being as large as the world due to love of this world and attachment to it, like the heedless. We have proved in many parts of the Risale-i Nur that belief at once heals that immaterial being of yours, which is bruised and battered by the blows of death and separation, and saves it from the wounds and truly heals it. But I cut short the discussion here so as not to weary you. As for the medicine of belief, it shows its effect when you carry out your religious obligations as far as is possible. Heedlessness, vice, the lusts of the soul, and illicit amusements reduce its effectiveness. Illness dispels heedlessness, cuts the appetites, is an obstacle to illicit pleasures, so take advantage of it. Make use of the sacred medicines and lights of belief through repentance and seeking forgiveness, and prayer and supplication.

May Almighty Allah restore you to health and make your illnesses atonement for your sins. Amen. Amen. Amen.

﴿اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ الَّذِي هَدٰينَا لِهٰذَا وَمَا كُنَّا لِنَهْتَدِيَ لَوْلَآ اَنْ هَدٰينَا اللّٰهُ لَقَدْ جَآءَتْ رُسُلُ رَبِّنَا بِالْحَقِّ﴾

And they say: All praise be to Allah Who has guided us to this; never could we have found guidance had it not been for the guidance of Allah; indeed, the Messengers of our Sustainer did bring the truth. (7:43)

﴿سُبْحَانَكَ لَا عِلْمَ لَنَآ اِلَّا مَا عَلَّمْتَنَآ اِنَّكَ اَنْتَ الْعَلِيمُ الْحَكِيمُ﴾

Glory be unto You! We have no knowledge save that which You have taught us; indeed, You are All-Knowing, All-Wise. (2:32)

اَللّٰهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلٰى سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ ، طِبِّ الْقُلُوبِ وَدَوَائِهَا وَعَافِيَةِ الْاَبْدَانِ وَشِفَائِهَا وَنُورِ الْاَبْصَارِ وَضِيَائِهَا وَعَلٰى اٰلِهِ وَصَحْبِهِ وَسَلِّمْ

O Allah! Grant blessings to our master Muhammad, the medicine for our hearts and their remedy, the good health of our bodies and their healing, the light of our eyes and their radiance, and to his Family and Companions, and grant them peace.

The Seventeenth Letter

[An Addendum to the Twenty-Fifth Flash]

A Letter of Condolence On the Death of a Child

بِاسْمِهِ

﴿وَاِنْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ اِلَّا يُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِهِ﴾

And in His Name, be He glorified!

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

My Dear Brother of the hereafter, Hafız Halid Efendi!

﴿بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ﴾

﴿وَبَشِّرِ الصَّابِرِينَ ۝ اَلَّذِينَ اِذَا اَصَابَتْهُمْ مُصِيبَةٌ قَالُوا اِنَّا لِلّٰهِ وَاِنَّا اِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ﴾

In the Name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate.

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

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

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

Second Point: One time when a man was in prison they sent one of his lovable children to him. The unhappy prisoner suffered both his own sorrows, and since he could not make the child happy, he also suffered at his pain. Then the compassionate judge sent someone to him with a message which said: "For sure the child is yours, but he is my subject and one of my people. I shall take him to a fine palace and look after him there." The man wept in anguish. He said: "I won't give you my child, he is my one comfort!" His friends said to him: "Your grief is meaningless. If it is the child you pity, he will go to a spacious, happy palace in place of this dirty, distressing dungeon. If you are sorry for yourself and seeking your own interests, you will suffer much distress and pain at the child's difficulties if he remains here, in addition to the single dubious, temporary benefit you receive. If he goes there, it will be of manifold advantage for you, for he will attract the king's mercy and will be an intercessor for you. The king will want you to see him, and he is sure not to send him to the prison, so he will release you, summon you to the palace, and allow you to meet with the child there. But on condition you have confidence in the king and you obey him!"

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

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

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

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

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

اَلْحُكْمُ لِلّٰهِ﴿اِنَّا لِلّٰهِ وَاِنَّآ اِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ﴾

*Say: "The command is Allah's. (40:12) * To Allah do we belong and to Him shall we return," (2:156)*

and bear it patiently.

اَلْبَاقِي هُوَ الْبَاقِي

The Eternal One, He is the Eternal One!

Said Nursi

The Second Flash

﴿بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ﴾

﴿إِذْ نَادٰى رَبَّهُ أَنِّي مَسَّنِيَ الضُّرُّ وَأَنْتَ أَرْحَمُ الرَّاحِمِينَ﴾

In the Name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate.

When he called upon his Lord saying: "Verily harm has afflicted me, and You are the Most Merciful of the Merciful!" (21:83)

The supplication of Job (Upon whom be peace), the champion of patience, is both well-tested and effective. Drawing on the verse, we should say in our supplication,

رَبِّ إِنِّي مَسَّنِيَ الضُّرُّ وَأَنْتَ أَرْحَمُ الرَّاحِمِينَ *"O my **Lord** and **Sustainer**! Indeed harm has afflicted me, and You are the Most Merciful of the Merciful."*

The gist of the well-known story of Job (1) (Upon whom be peace) is as follows:

While afflicted with numerous wounds and sores for a long time, he recalled the great recompense to be had for his sickness, and endured it with utmost patience. But later, when the worms generated by his wounds penetrated to his heart and his tongue, the seat of the remembrance and knowledge of Allah, (2) he feared that his duty of worship would suffer, and so he said in supplication not for the sake of his own comfort, but for the sake of his worship of Allah:

"O Lord! Harm has afflicted me; my remembrance of You with my tongue and my worship of You with my heart will suffer." **Allah Almighty** then accepted this pure sincere, disinterested and devout supplication in the most miraculous fashion. He granted to Job perfect good health and made manifest in him all kinds of compassion. (3) This Flash contains five points:

FIRST POINT

Corresponding to the outer wounds and sicknesses of Job (Upon whom be peace), we have inner sicknesses of the spirit and heart. If our inner being were to be turned outward, and our outer being turned inward, we would appear more wounded and diseased than Job. For each sin that we commit and each doubt that enters our mind, inflicts wounds on our heart and our spirit.

(1) *See, Tabarî, Jâmi' al-Bayân, xvii, 71-2; Ibn Hajar, Fath al-Bârî, vi, 426; Ibn al-Mubârak, al-Zuhd, 49.*

(2) *See, Ibn al-Athîr, al-Kâmil fi'l-Târîkh, i, 98-100.*

(3) See, Qur'an, 21:84, 38:42-3. Also, Bukhârî, Ghusl, 20; Tawhîd, 35; Musnad, ii, 314.

The wounds of Job (Upon whom be peace) were of such a nature as to threaten his brief worldly life, but our inner wounds threaten our infinitely long everlasting life. We need the supplication of Job thousands of times more than he did himself. Just as the worms that arose from his wounds penetrated to his heart and tongue, so too the wounds that sin inflicts upon us and the temptations and doubts that arise from those wounds will - may Allah protect us! - penetrate our inner heart, the seat of belief, and thus wound belief. Penetrating too the spiritual joy of the tongue, the interpreter of belief, they cause it to shun in revulsion the remembrance of Allah, and reduce it to silence.

Sin, penetrating to the heart, will blacken and darken it until it extinguishes the light of belief. (*) Within each sin is a path leading to unbelief. Unless that sin is swiftly obliterated by seeking Allah's pardon, it will grow from a worm into a snake that gnaws on the heart.

For example, a man who secretly commits a shameful sin will fear the disgrace that results if others become aware of it. Thus the existence of angels and spirit beings will be hard for him to endure, and he will long to deny it, even on the strength of the slightest indication.

Similarly, one who commits a major sin deserving of the torment of Hell, will desire the non-existence of Hell wholeheartedly, and whenever he hears of the threat of Hell-fire, he will dare to deny it on the strength of a slight indication and doubt, unless he takes up in protection the shield of repentance and seeking forgiveness.

Similarly, one who does not perform the obligatory prayer and fulfil his duty of worship will be affected by distress, just as he would be in case of the neglect of a minor duty toward some petty ruler. Thus, his laziness in fulfulling his obligation, despite the repeated commands of **the Sovereign of Pre-Eternity**, will distress him greatly, and on account of that distress will desire and say to himself: "Would that there were no such duty of worship!" In turn, there will arise from this desire a desire to deny Allah, and bear enmity toward Him. If some doubt concerning the existence of **the Divine Being** comes to his heart, he will be inclined to embrace it like a conclusive proof. A wide gate to destruction will be opened in front of him. The wretch does not know that although he is delivered by denial from the slight trouble of duty of worship, he has made himself, by that same denial, the target for milions of troubles that are far more awesome. Fleeing from the bite of a gnat, he welcomes the bite of the snake.

There are many other examples, which may be understood with reference to these three, so that the sense of,



Nay but their hearts are stained (83:14) will become apparent.

(*) *See, Tirmidhî, Tafsîr Sûra 83:1; Ibn Mâja, Zuhd, 29; Muwattâ', Kalâm, 18; Musnad, ii, 297.*

SECOND POINT

As was explained concerning the meaning of divine determining, known as destiny, in the Twenty-Sixth Word, men have no right to complain in the case of disasters and illness for the following three reasons:

First Reason: **Allah Most High** has made the garment of the body with which He has clothed man a manifestation of His art. He has made man to be a model on which He cuts, trims, alters and changes the garment of the body, thus displaying the manifestation of various of His names. Just as the name of **Healer** makes it necessary that illness should exist, so too the name of **Provider** requires that hunger should exist. And so on.

مَالِكُ الْمُلْكِ يَتَصَرَّفُ فِي مُلْكِهِ كَيْفَ يَشَاءُ

The Lord of All Dominion has disposal over His dominion as He wishes.

Second Reason: It is by means of disasters and sicknesses that life is refined, (1) perfected, strengthened and advanced; that it yields results, attains perfection and fulfils its own purpose. (2) Life led monotonously on the couch of ease and comfort resembles not so much the pure good that is being, as the pure evil that is non-being; it tends in fact in that direction.

Third Reason: This worldly realm is the field of testing, the abode of service. It is not the place of pleasure, reward, and requital. Considering, then, that it is the abode of service and place of worship, sicknesses and misfortunes - as long as they do not affect belief and are patiently endured (3) - conform fully to service and worship, and even strengthen it. Since they make each hour's worship equivalent to that of a day, (4) one should offer thanks instead of complaining. Worship consists in fact of two kinds, positive and negative. What is meant by the positive is obvious. As for negative worship, this is when one afflicted with misfortune or sickness perceives his own weakness and helplessness, and turning to his **Compassionate Lord**, seeks refuge in Him, meditates upon Him, petitions Him, and thus offers a pure form of worship that no hypocrisy can penetrate. If he endures patiently, thinks of the reward attendant on misfortune and offers thanks, then each hour that he passes will count as a whole day spent in worship. His brief life becomes very long. There are even cases where a single minute is counted as equal to a whole day's worship.

(1) See, Muslim, Birr, 52; Abû Dâ'ûd, Janâ'iz, 1; al-Hâkim, al-Mustadrak, i, 1500.
(2) See, Bukhârî, Mardâ, 1; Muslim, Birr, 52; Tirmidhî, Zuhd, 57; Muwattâ, Janâ'iz, 40.
(3) See, Tirmidhî, Da'wât, 79; Nasâ'î, al-Sunan al-Kubrâ, vi, 106.
(4) See, Dârimî, Riqâq, 56; Musnad, ii, 159, 194, 198; iii, 148, 238, 258.

I once was extremely anxious because of an awesome illness that struck one of my brothers of the hereafter, Muhajir Hafiz Ahmed. (1) But then a warning came to my heart: "Congratulate him!" Each minute he spends is counted as a whole day's worship. He was in any event enduring his illness in patience and gratitude.

THIRD POINT

As we have pointed out in one or two of the Words, whenever one thinks of his past life, he will say in his heart or with his tongue either "Ah!" or "Oh!" That is he will either experience regret, or say "Thanks and praise be to Allah!" Regret is inspired by the pains arising from the cessation of former pleasures and separation from them. For the cessation of pleasure is a pain in itself. Sometimes a momentary pleasure will cause everlasting pain. To think upon it will be like lancing a wound, causing regret to gush forth.

As for the lasting spiritual pleasure that comes from the cessation of momentary pains experienced in the past, it inspires man to exclaim, "Thanks and praise be to Allah!" In addition to this innate tendency of man, if he thinks of the reward that results from misfortune and the requital that awaits him in the hereafter, if he realizes that his brief life will count as a long life because of misfortune, then instead of being merely patient he should be thankful. He should say, اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ عَلٰى كُلِّ حَالٍ سِوَى الْكُفْرِ وَالضَّلَالِ "Praise be to Allah for every state other than unbelief and misguidance." (3) It is commonly said that misfortune is longlasting. Indeed it is, but not because it is troublesome and distressing as people customarily imagine, but rather because it yields vital results just like a long life.

FOURTH POINT

As was explained in the First Station of the Twenty-First Word, the power of patient endurance given to man by **Allah Almighty** is adequate to every misfortune, unless squandered on baseless fears. But through the predominance of delusion, man's neglect and his imagining this transient life to be eternal, he squanders his power of endurance on the past and the future. His endurance is not equal to the misfortunes of the present, and he begins to complain. It is as if - Allah forbid! - he were complaining of **Allah Almighty** to men. In a most unjustified and even lunatic fashion, he complains and demonstrates his lack of patience.

If the day that is past held misfortune, the distress is now gone, and only tranquillity remains; the pain has vanished and the pleasure in its cessation remains; the trouble is gone, and the reward remains. Hence one should not complain but give thanks for enjoyment. One should not resent misfortune, but love it. The transient life of the past comes to be counted as an eternal and blessed life because of misfortune. To think upon past pain with one's fancy and then to waste part of one's patience is lunacy.

(1) *Muhajir Hafiz Ahmed was a merchant in Barla and among the first students of the Risale-i Nur. Bediuzzaman stayed in his guest house on first arriving in Barla (2) in the early spring of 1926, and he assisted Bediuzzaman for the eight and a half years he remained in Barla.*

(2) *Barla: Bediuzzaman's place of exile, 1926-1934. A small village in Isparta Province in S. W. Turkey. [Tr.]*

(3) *Tirmidhî, Da'wât, 45; Ibn Mâja, Muqaddima, 23; Du'â, 2.*

As far as days yet to come are concerned, since they have not yet come, to think now of the illness or misfortune to be borne during them and display impatience, is also foolishness. To say to oneself "Tomorrow or the day after I will be hungry and thirsty" and constantly to drink water and eat bread today, is pure madness. Similarly, to think of misfortunes and sicknesses yet in the future but now non-existent, to suffer them already, to show impatience and to oppress oneself without any compulsion, is such stupidity that it no longer deserves pity and compassion.

In short, just as gratitude increases divine bounty, so too complaint increases misfortune, and removes all occasion for compassion.

During World War One, a blessed person in Erzurum was afflicted with an awesome disease. I went to visit him and he said to me complaining bitterly: "I have not been able to place my head on the pillow and sleep for a hundred nights." I was much grieved. Suddenly a thought came to me and I said:

"Brother, the hundred difficult days you have spent are now just like one hundred happy days. Do not think of them and complain; rather look at them and be grateful. As for future days, since they have not yet come, place your trust in your **Compassionate and Merciful Lord**. Do not weep before being beaten, do not be afraid of nothing, do not give non-being the colour of being. Think of the present hour; your power of patient endurance is enough for this hour. Do not act like the maddened commander who expects reinforcement on his right wing by an enemy force deserting to join him from his left, and then begins to disperse his forces in the centre to the left and the right, before the enemy has joined him on the right. The enemy then destroys his centre, left weak, with a minimal force. Brother, do not be like him. Mobilize all your strength for this present hour, and think of divine mercy, reward in the hereafter, and how your brief and transient life is being transformed into a long and eternal form. Instead of complaining bitterly, give joyful thanks."

Much relieved, he said, "Praise and thanks be to Allah, my disease is now a tenth of what it was before."

FIFTH POINT consisting of three matters.

First Matter: True and harmful misfortune is that which affects religion. One should at all times seek refuge at the divine court from misfortune in matters of religion and cry out for help. (1) But misfortunes that do not affect religion in reality are not misfortunes. Some of them are warnings from **the Most Merciful One**. If a shepherd throws a stone at his sheep when they trespass on another's pasture, they understand that the stone is intended as a warning to save them from a perilous action; full of gratitude they turn back. (2) So too there are many apparent misfortunes that are divine warnings and admonishments, others that constitute the penance of sin; (3) and others again that dissolve man's state of neglect, remind him of his human helplessness and weakness, thus affording him a form of tranquillity.

(1) See, Tirmidhî, Da'wât, 79; Nasâ'î, al-Sunan al-Kubrâ, vi, 106.
(2) See, Bukhârî, Îmân, 39; Buyû', 2; Muslim, Musâqât, 107; Abû Nu'aym, Hilyat al-Awliyâ', i, 11.
(3) See, Tirmidhî, Tafsîr Sûra 4:24; Musnad, ii, 303, 335, 402.

As for the variety of misfortune that is illness, it is not at all a misfortune, as has already been said, but rather a favour from Allah and a means of purification. (1) There is a tradition which says: "As a tree drops its ripe fruit when shaken, so do sins fall away through the shaking of fever." (2)

Job (Upon whom be peace) did not pray in his supplication for the comfort of his soul, but rather sought cure for the purpose of worship, when disease was preventing his remembrances of Allah with his tongue and his meditation upon Allah in his heart. We too should make our primary intent, when making that supplication, the healing of the inward and spiritual wounds that arise from sinning.

As far as physical diseases are concerned, we may seek refuge from them when they hinder our worship. But we should seek refuge in a humble and supplicating fashion, not protestingly and plaintively. If we accept Allah as our **Lord** and **Sustainer**, then we must accept too all that He gives us in His capacity of Lord. To sigh and complain in a manner implying objection to divine determining and decree is a kind of criticism of divine determining, an accusation levelled against Allah's compassion. The one who criticizes divine determining strikes his head against the anvil and breaks it. Whoever accuses Allah's mercy will inevitably be deprived of it. To use a broken hand to exact revenge will only cause further damage to the hand. So too a man who, afflicted with misfortune, responds to it with protesting complaint and anxiety, is only compounding his misfortune.

Second Matter: Physical misfortunes grow when they are seen to be large, and shrink when they are seen to be small. For example, a dream enters one's vision at night. If one pays it attention it swells up and grows; if one does not, it disappears. So too if one attempts to ward off an attacking swarm of bees, they will become more aggressive; whereas if one pays them no attention they will disperse. Thus if one regards physical misfortunes as great and grants them importance, they will grow, and because of anxiety pass from the body and strike root in the heart. The result will then be an inward affliction on which the outward misfortune fastens to perpetuate itself. But if the anxiety is removed by contentment with the divine decree and reliance on Allah, the physical misfortune will gradually decrease, dry up and vanish, just like a tree whose roots have been severed. I once composed the following verses in description of this truth:

Cry not out at misfortune, O wretch, come, trust in Allah!

For know that crying out compounds the misfortune and is a great error.

Find misfortune's Sender, and know it is a gift within gift, and pleasure.

So leave crying out and offer thanks; like the nightingale, smile through your tears!

If you find Him not, know the world is all pain within pain, transience and loss.

So why lament at a small misfortune while upon you is a worldful of woe? Come, trust in Allah!
Trust in Allah! Laugh in misfortune's face; it too will laugh.

As it laughs, it will diminish; it will be changed and transformed.

(1) *See, Muslim, Birr, 52; Abû Dâ'ûd, Janâ'iz, 1; al-Daylamî, al-Musnad, i, 123; al-Hâkim al-Tirmidhî, Nawâdir al-USûl, i, 286.*
(2) *Bukhârî, Mardâ, 3, 13, 16; Muslim, Birr, 45; Ibn Mâja, Adab, 56; Dârimî, Riqâq, 57; Musnad, i, 381, 441, 455; iii, 152.*

If in single-handed combat one smiles at an awesome enemy, his enmity will be changed to conciliatoriness; his hostility will become a mere joke, will shrink and disappear. If one confronts misfortune with reliance on Allah, the result will be similar.

Third Matter: Each age has particular characteristics. (*) In this age of neglect misfortune has changed its form. In certain ages and for certain persons, misfortune is not in reality misfortune, but rather a divine favour. Since I consider those afflicted with illness in the present age to be fortunate - on condition that their illness does not affect their religion - it does not occur to me to oppose illness and misfortune, nor to take pity on the afflicted. Whenever I encounter some afflicted youth, I find that he is more concerned with his religious duties and the hereafter than are his peers. From this I deduce that illness does not constitute a misfortune for such people, but rather a bounty from Allah. It is true that illness causes him distress in his brief, transient and worldly life, but it is beneficial for his eternal life. It is to be regarded as a kind of worship. If he were healthy he would be unable to maintain the state he enjoyed while sick and would fall into dissipation, as a result of the impetuousness of youth and the dissipated nature of the age.

Conclusion

Allah Almighty, in order to display His infinite power and unlimited mercy, has made inherent in man infinite impotence and unlimited want. Further, in order to display the endless embroideries of His names, He has created man like a machine capable of receiving unlimited varieties of pain, as well as infinite varieties of pleasure. Within that human machine are hundreds of instruments, each of which has different pains and pleasures, different duties and rewards. Simply, all of the divine names manifested in the macroanthropos that is the world also have manifestations in the microcosm that is man. Beneficial matters like good health, well-being, and pleasures cause man to offer thanks and prompt the human machine to perform its functions in many respects, and thus man becomes like a factory producing thanks. Similarly, by means of misfortune, illness and pain, and other motion-inducing contingencies, the other cogs of the human machine are set in motion and revolution. The mine of weakness, impotence, and poverty inherent in human nature is made to work. It induces in man a state whereby he seeks refuge and help not only with a single tongue, but with the tongue of each of his members. Thus by means of those contingencies man becomes like a moving pen comprising thousands of different pens. He inscribes the appointed course of his existence on the page of his life or the Tablet in the World of Similitudes; he puts forth a declaration of the divine names; and becomes himself an ode to the glory of Allah, thus fulfilling the duties of his nature.

(*) *See, Bayhaqî, Shu'ab al-Îmân, iv, 263; Khatîb al-Baghdâdî, al-Jâmi' li-Akhlâq al-Râwî wa Âdâb al-Sâmî, i, 212, 407.*

[A letter written to a doctor who felt a great longing for the treatises of the Risale-i Nur and had been awakened through studying them.]

Greetings, O fortunate doctor who diagnosed his own sickness! My true and dear friend!

The spiritual awakening your enthusiastic letter indicates deserves congratulations. You should know that the most valuable of beings is life. And the most valuable of duties is service to life. And the most valuable service to life are efforts to transform transient life into everlasting life. As for all the value and importance of this life, it lies in its being the seed, source and spring of eternal life. But not so as to retrict the vision to this fleeting life in a way that will poison and destroy eternal life; that is a lunacy like preferring a momentary flash of lightening to an eternal sun.

In the view of truth, those who are sicker than everyone else are materialist and heedless doctors. If only they would take the medicines of belief, which are like antidotes, from the sacred pharmacy of the Qur'an, they would cure both their own sicknesses and the wounds of mankind. Allah willing, your awakening will bind your wounds and will also make you a medicine for the sicknesses of other doctors.

Also, you should know that sometimes consoling a despairing and hopeless ill person is more beneficial than a thousand medicines. But a doctor sunk in the swamp of Nature only adds another layer of darkness to the grievous despair of such an unfortunate ill person. Allah willing, this awakening of yours will make you a doctor who is a means of consolation and a spreader of light to those unhappy people.

You should know that life is short and the work to be done much. I wonder, if like me, you had inspected your head, how many unnecessary, useless, unimportant things, lifeless like great piles of dry wool, you would have found among your knowledge. For I inspected my head and I found many unnecessary things. And so, it is necessary to seek a way of making that scientific information and knowledge of philosophy useful, luminous, and spiritual. You also should ask **Almighty Allah** for an awakening so that you may transform your thought into thought for **the All-Wise and Glorious One**'s sake; so that you may set fire to that dry wood and illuminate it, and that your unnecessary scientific knowledge may become valuable knowledge of Allah.

Furthermore, since The Words are able to speak with your conscience, each of their words is a letter to you not from me as myself, but from me as the herald of the Qur'an. And suppose that each is a prescription from the sacred pharmacy of the Qur'an. And in my absence, through them open up a sphere of company and conversation as though I were present.

Said Nursi

Nur Way 2026