



Children of Jannah

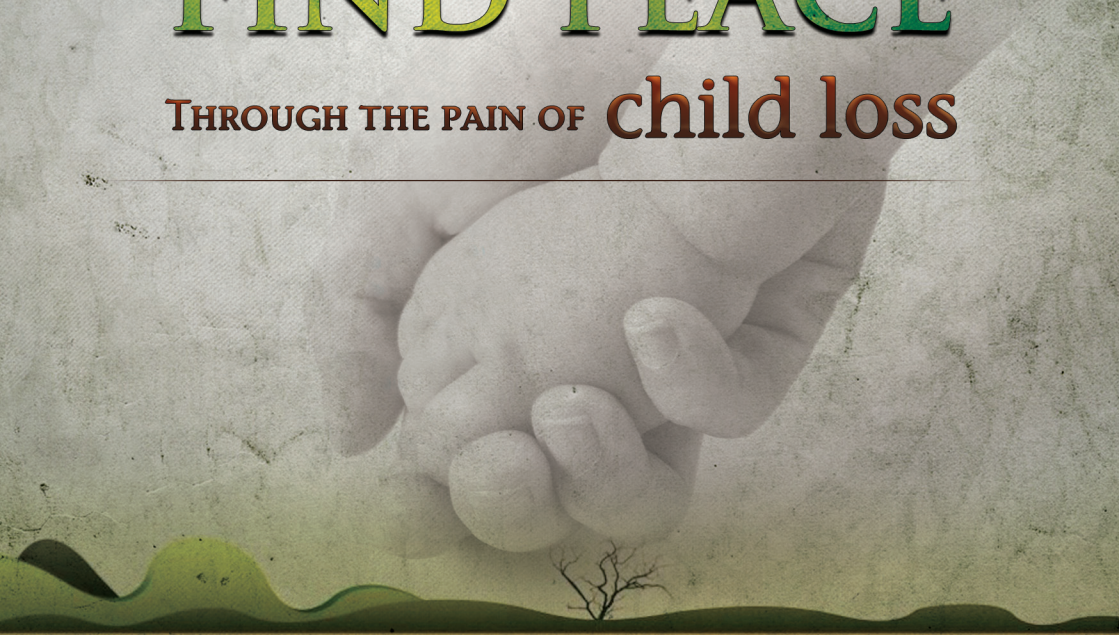
Sorrow to *Serenity*



11 Ways TO HELP A MOTHER

FIND PEACE

THROUGH THE PAIN OF **child loss**



By Hafizah Ismail



Children of Jannah

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“When a person’s child dies, Allah the Most High asks His angels, ‘Have you taken out the life of the child of My slave?’ They reply in the affirmative. He then asks, ‘Have you taken the fruit of his heart?’ They reply in the affirmative. Thereupon He asks, ‘What has My slave said?’ They say, ‘He has praised You and said, Inna lillahi wa inna ilayhi raji’oon (To Allah we belong and to Him we will return).’ Allah says, ‘Build a house for My slave in Jannah and name it Bayt-ul-Hamd (the House of Praise).’” [AtTirmidhi]

Dearest Mother,

I am sorry to hear about your loss, I offer my condolences and I pray Allah grants you beautiful patience. There is no pain more far reaching and deeper than losing one’s child. The reality is we do not expect children to die before their parents. Generally speaking, children outlive their parents, not the other way round. The loss of a child is not only felt in the present, but the pain which emanates from it may extend to future hopes and dreams also.

Grief is a natural response to the emotional suffering when a child passes away. People grieve in different ways. The initial shock of a child’s death may elicit a range of emotions and moods. Some may deny what has happened or attempt to apportion blame through feelings of anger or guilt. Others may feel emptiness, an intense longing for their child and overwhelming sadness. These responses are all normal during the grieving process and allow a mother to arrive at the point of accepting the reality of her loss. The grieving process is unique to an individual, and the ways of coping with it reflect one’s own life and experiences. Progressing through the pain of grief and adjusting to an environment without the physical presence of one’s child will help with moving forward.

When Muslims are faced with difficulties, everything possible ought to be done to either remove the difficulties or deal with them. If removing the difficulty is impossible, a Muslim tries to be patient and steadfast, an embodiment which the Qur'an refers to as 'beautiful patience.'

When a child passes away before having reached the age of puberty, Allah honours both the child and parents by welcoming the child into Jannah. An emotional bridge to Jannah is now formed for the parents, as the child that they lost now resides there eternally. This has been unanimously agreed upon by the scholars of Islam.

Following the death of a child, every mother hopes and desires the healing of her loss, and for a day that will come when she can find joy in life again without forgetting her child. This ebook will insha Allah support you with the grieving process following your loss, by presenting to you some of the ways in which you can find peace from the pain of child loss.

After each chapter, I have included a section where you can write down the benefits you have found and what you will do to move forward. I have also included insightful comments from mothers across the globe who share in the experience of losing a child.

"You cannot prevent the birds of sorrow from flying over your head, but you can prevent them from building nests in your hair." [Old Chinese Proverb]

Hafizah Ismail
Founder, Children of Jannah

The 11 Ways

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1. *Trusting Allah through your Grief*

“Allah loves those who put their trust (in Him).” [Qur’an, 3:159]

*“Whoever puts his trust in Allah, He will be enough for him.”
[Qur’an, 65:3]*

Dear Mother,

Know that Allah loves you and your child, and that He will never wrong you or place a burden on you greater than you can bear. Know that Allah, your loving Creator, wishes things to be easy for you and wishes not to put you in difficulty.

*“Allah does not impose on a being any more than it can stand; for it, is what it has earned; against it, is what it has merited.”
[Qur’an, 2:286]*

“Allah does not want to make things difficult for you, but He does want to purify you and to perfect His blessing upon you so that hopefully you will be thankful.” [Qur’an, 5:6]

Know that with Allah you are guaranteed victory regardless of your condition. If you become ill, your sins fall from you just as leaves fall from a tree.

“How amazing is the affair of the believer. There is good for him in everything and that is for no one but the believer. If good times come his way, he expresses gratitude to Allah and that is good for him, and if hardship comes his way, he endures it patiently and that is better for him.” [Muslim]

“No fatigue, nor disease, nor sorrow, nor sadness, nor hurt, nor distress befalls a Muslim, even if it were the prick he receives from a thorn, except that Allah expiates some of his sins for it.” [AlBukhari]

If you lose a child, take comfort in the promise of Allah and His Messenger that your child will remain waiting for you in the Hereafter and will intercede for you until you enter Jannah. Being able to trust Allah through the grief of your loss will give you certainty that nothing is truly lost with Him and, with this, the pain, sadness, anguish and distress will lessen.

“So verily, along with every hardship is relief.” [Qur’an, 94:5]

The advice given by Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, to his daughter Zaynab, may Allah be pleased with her, when her child was dying, was:

“Surely, Allah takes what is His, and what He gives is His, and to all things He has appointed a time ... so have patience and be rewarded.” [AlBukhari]

Allah, AlWadood, the Loving, provides love and mercy for His servants which no one else can. With this knowledge, the calamity of losing a child bears fruit, and hearts that have been shattered can be rebuilt by Allah, becoming stronger than they were before. Trust Allah and He will become your companion.

“Nothing can happen to us except what Allah has ordained for us. He is Our Master. It is in Allah that the believers should put their trust.” [Qur’an, 9:51]

Mothers' experiences

"Losing my child was the most painful and upsetting thing I have ever been through, but I never stopped trusting Allah amidst the pain. Knowing that Allah loved the son he gifted me and knew what was best for both of us, helped me a lot. The prospect of reuniting with my son in Jannah is soothing." - Umm Adam L

"Trusting Allah has helped me greatly. Whatever He does is for the best; we can only ponder upon the reasons as to why such a thing has happened to our loved one. Although we will find out the reasoning in the hereafter, on the Day of Judgement, I can only say that I trust in what Allah has done and stick by His command. I would advise other sisters to have faith in Allah ..." - Umm Fatima

"Allah is the creator and all life goes back to him.' This is the reality, which we have to accept. Despite this knowledge, it was, and still is, very difficult to accept that my son is no longer with me. Insha Allah we will get him back. That's a promise from Allah. So my dear sisters, there is always darkness before dawn, no night lasts forever. I always believed in my heart that Allah is the One who is testing me and He will give me the strength to bear it." - Umm Sa'ad

"Many sisters say this experience made their iman stronger, but for me it was really hard. I questioned many things but did not lose the faith. I realise my son did not belong here and I am sure Allah knows best. It was hard, but Allah brought peace to my heart. When I felt helpless and couldn't see which way to go, I did not despair and did not lose the hope to see my baby again. The only thing that makes me go on is Allah's promise that He is always with us." - Umm Mikhaal

"I only have trust in Allah. Humans can disappoint you but Allah will not. He only does what is best for you so He is the only One to make the right decisions for me. I believe Allah wanted me to become an active Muslimah and if I still had my daughter with me, then this may not have been the case." - Umm Zaynab

"Trusting Allah is the only way to get through a loss or any hardship. If you don't have that trust you are ALONE. You are alone with your thoughts, your actions, your sadness and many questions will remain unanswered." - Umm Ruqaiyah



Write down 2 benefits of Trusting Allah through your Grief



By trusting and having faith in Allah, I know that He loves me and wants the best for me. For this I will be rewarded, insha Allah.



2 . Turning to Allah through Supplication & Remembrance

Supplicating to Allah

“Du’a is like a weapon, and a weapon is only as good as the person who is using it.” [Ibn AlQayyim AlJawziyyah]

A supplication, or du’a, is any prayer addressed to Allah. Du’a is one of the most beloved acts of worship to Allah, and He has given us many opportunities to come closer to Him. Turning to Allah through supplication can help you accept your loss, act as a source of comfort and, most importantly, open the lines of communication between you and your Creator. As Allah says,

“...‘Call upon Me, and I will answer you!’.” [Qur’an, 40:60]

So, turn to Allah because He alone can lift your grief and ease your pain. If a du’a is spoken from a heart filled with faith, it removes worries and brings comfort. By consistently using du’a as your weapon, you never lose hope in the mercy of Allah.

When making du’a, it is important to utilise the times and occasions when your du’a is more likely to be answered.

At night:

“There is at night an hour, when no Muslim happens to be asking Allah any matter of this world or the Hereafter, except that he will be given it. And this (occurs) every night.” [Muslim]

During prostration:

“The closest any worshipper can be to his Lord is while he is in prostration, so increase your du’as in it.” [Muslim]

When Fasting or during Travel:

“Three du’as are never rejected: the du’a of the father, the du’a of the fasting, and the du’a of the traveller.” [AlBayhaqi]

Some supplications of the Prophet (peace be upon him) in times of worry and stress

“It is the decree of Allah and He does whatever He wills” [Muslim]

“O Allah, I seek refuge in You from grief and sadness, from weakness and from laziness, from miserliness and from cowardice, from being overcome by debt and overpowered by men (i.e. others).” [AlBukhari]

“There is no Muslim that is afflicted with a calamity, and he says what Allah has commanded him to say, ‘To Allah we belong and to Him we will return! O Allah, give me the rewards (of being patient over) this calamity, and grant me something better than it,’ except that Allah will give him something better to replace it.” [Muslim]



Example of Umm Salamah

In a long hadith, Umm Salamah, may Allah be pleased with her, narrates that when Abu Salamah passed away, the Prophet, peace be upon him, said:

“Do not ask for yourselves anything but good, for the angels will say ‘Ameen’ to all that you ask for. O Allah, forgive Abu Salamah, and raise his ranks among those who are guided.” [Muslim]

Faced with the death of her husband, Umm Salamah continued to say the du’a taught to her by the Prophet, peace be upon him: (O Allah, compensate me for my hardship and provide me a substitute of it.) “Allahumma ajirnee fee museebatee, wakhluף lee khayrun minha”. Umm Salamah comments: “I was firm to say the du’a, but I thought to myself, how could I get anything better than Abu Salamah? Allah answered my du’a and I married the Messenger of Allah! And he is better than Abu Salamah!”

Mothers’ experiences

“I made du’a for patience and strength for me and my husband and I truly believe Allah helped us greatly. Alhamdulillah, we have been granted patience and strength. I also found that frequently reciting, ‘la hawla wa la quwwata illa billah’ (there is no power or strength except with Allah), during my son’s final moments brought me much peace.” - Umm Adam L

“By making consistent du’a to Allah to bring peace to my heart, my suffering eased. I literally used to talk to Him, sharing my feelings and emotions, as though He was my friend. Even though He knew what was in my heart, I found it really helpful to relay my intense inner grief before my Creator.” - Umm Sa’ad

Virtues of Remembering Allah

“Verily in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find rest.”

[Qur'an, 13:28]

Allah, your Creator, assures you that your broken heart will mend with His remembrance. Remembering Allah often will help you through the grieving process.

“Remembrance of Allah is to the heart what water is to the fish. What happens to a fish when it is taken out of water?” [Ibn Taymiyyah]

Allah created you and knows you better than you know yourself. Know that Allah is pleased with you when you remember Him, and that He desires to help you.

“Allah the Most High says, ‘I am with my slave when he thinks of Me and I am with him when he mentions Me. For if he mentions Me to himself, I mention him to Myself; and if he mentions Me in a gathering, I mention him in a superior gathering. If he approaches Me by a hand’s width, I approach him by an arm’s length; and if he approaches me by an arm’s length, I approach him by two arm’s length. And if he comes to Me walking, I hasten to him swiftly.’” [AlBukhari]

Imagine the honour of having your name mentioned by Allah Himself.

“So remember Me, and I will remember you.” [Qur'an, 2:152]

“And remember Allah your Lord by your tongue and within yourself, humbly and in awe, without loudness, by words in the morning and in the afternoon, and be not amongst those who are neglectful.”

[Qur'an, 7:205]

Mothers' experiences

"Remembering Allah often through His beautiful names makes me feel stronger and eases my pain. Although my heart will always have a hole in it, my anxiety returns when I stop remembering Allah."

- Umm Adam L

"I used to remember Allah without feeling better. But then I studied how His remembrance was a state of being rather than words on the tongue. Understanding this difference really made a difference to my healing." - Umm Rayaan

"If one does not school oneself Islamically in the subjects of death and the afterlife, it is very easy to go wrong in hard situations and utter words displeasing to Allah. Allah has promised that children who die before puberty will be reunited with their parents on the Day of Judgement. For me, this knowledge is very comforting. I make du'a that Allah grants me patience until then." - Umm Sa'ad

"Allah is the only One who can really understand. Every time I make du'a and remember Allah when I'm sad, by doing so I'm remembering Mikaaal as well." - Umm Mikaaal

"Du'a and dhikr helped me a lot when times were really hard, when I didn't know how to cope emotionally. I would turn to Allah and make du'a. I really felt like He answered me, as the peace He would bring to my heart was amazing. In my prayer, I would always beg Him to help me pass this test and ask Him to hold my hand through it." - Umm Abderrahman



Write down 2 benefits of Turning to Allah through Supplication & Remembrance



By supplicating to Allah and remembering Him often, I know that I can turn to Him at all times because He is always there for me. I also know that I can mention specific du'as when I do turn to Him.



3 . Connecting with the Qur'an

"We send down in the Qur'an that which is a healing and a mercy for those who believe." [Qur'an, 17:82]

Recitation of the Qur'an is one of the most beautiful ways to find peace amidst the pain of losing a child. Allah has given you His words to recite and reconnect with when you feel frail, or need comfort when a calamity befalls you. Your relationship with the Qur'an will help you enter a space where Allah speaks to you and guides you to a place of healing.

When you allow yourself to consciously interact with the Qur'an and ponder over its meanings, you will encounter profound emotions. The Qur'an will illuminate the deepest parts of your soul and will fill your heart with feelings of tranquillity. Tears will run down your cheeks as you realise the ways in which Allah's words in the Qur'an are actually His address to you.

"O Allah, I am Your slave and the son of Your male slave and the son of Your female slave. My forehead is in Your hand (i.e. you have control over me). Your judgement upon me is assured and Your decree concerning me is just. I ask You by every name that You have named Yourself with, revealed in Your book, taught any one of Your creation or kept unto Yourself in the knowledge of the unseen that is with You, to make the Qur'an the spring of my heart, and the light of my chest, the banisher of my sadness and the reliever of my distress."

[Ahmed]

Connecting with the Qur'an brings peace and contentment to the heart.

“Verily, he who has nothing of the Qur’an in his heart is like a house (which has been) destroyed.” [AtTirmidhi]

Mothers’ experiences

“Recitation of the Qur’an during my bereavement was an essential healing tool that helped me find peace. When I thought, ‘this is my Creator talking to me about my personal situation’, it made me feel better. With every basmallah, I remembered His love and mercy.”
- Umm Rayaana

“From my own experience, I know the Qur’an has a healing effect upon the soul. Having lost my daughter last year, I read the Qur’an whenever I feel down. It is my helping hand through a dark tunnel that eventually brings me to see the light at the other end.”
- Umm Tasneem

“Pondering over Surat Kahf helped me a lot; it explains why sometimes we don’t understand when certain things happen, but they still happen for the best reason.” - Umm Adam R

“I started studying Tajweed shortly after my daughter passed away and it helped me to keep my mind occupied. I was continuously busy in memorisation and trying to understand the tafsir and this helped me move forward.” - Umm Zaynab

“When you go through any hardship and turn to Allah, either in prayer or recitation of the Qur’an, you always find a relevant message - about patience, thankfulness and blessings from Allah. You can relate just about anything in the Qur’an to your situation on any particular day or any particular emotion you are feeling”
- Umm Ruqaiyah

"My most favourite part of the Qur'an to listen to is Surat AshSharh, where Allah promises us ease after hardship, and then He promises us ease again. It is just so beautiful to know that if He is happy with us, He does not abandon us but instead gives us a great reward. He may have taken one of our gifts from this life, but I trust in Him that He has many other beautiful gifts waiting for us."

- Umm Abderrahman



Write down 2 benefits of Connecting with the Qur'an



Connecting with the Qur'an is a means to healing, finding comfort and communicating with my Creator when I am distressed.



4 . *Expressing your Feelings & Emotions*

“There is sacredness in tears. They are not the mark of weakness, but of power. They speak more eloquently than ten thousand tongues. They are the messengers of overwhelming grief... and unspeakable love.” [Washington Irving]

You will undoubtedly experience a roller-coaster ride of emotions after the death of your child. One of the factors that may interfere with overcoming your grief is the avoidance of these emotions. Expressing your grief by shedding tears and talking about your feelings to others will help you through the pain. To deny your feelings or to bottle them up inside is to invite a series of emotional and health problems to build up inside of you. You may often hear people who say, ‘If you have faith, you need not grieve!’ Yet contrary to such beliefs, faith does not prevent you from grief, it leads you through it. In the example of Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, after the death of his son Ibraheem, he said:

“The eyes shed tears and the heart feels pain, but we utter only what pleases our God. O Ibraheem! We are aggrieved at your demise.”
[AlBukhari]

Islam does not discourage grieving. The process of grieving is in itself a mercy from Allah. Rather than forbid it, Islam simply places limits on how we can express the sorrow we feel. The mourning period, for example, is prescribed as a period of three days. Without this ‘safety cap’ of three days, we may expose ourselves to the risk of falling into depression and becoming fixated on our loss. Such a fixation may have a detrimental effect on one’s wellbeing. By not extending our grief beyond what is advised by Allah and His Messenger, we work to accept Allah’s will and continually develop our faith in the face of trial.

As with all processes, this takes time. The pain will not vanish as soon as the mourning period has come to an end, and it is not expected that you will suddenly feel better after three days. Quite the opposite, the pangs of the heart will continue to linger; but it is what the servant does with her feelings of pain that makes all the difference. A natural expression of one's pain is to let the eyes tear, but what does the tongue say in such instances?

"To Allah we belong and to Him we will return." [Qur'an, 2:15]

Dear Sister,

Allah calls Himself AsSami, the All Hearing. He promises to listen to your cries for help and He alone has the power to aid you. The simple phrase above - Qur'an, 2:15 - is a reminder of the temporary nature of this life, and our ultimate servitude to Allah. The pain of your loss is thus cooled by the promise of Allah that the believers will ultimately be united, in happiness, with their families if they are able to patiently persevere through the tests of this life. Do as Prophet Yaqub, peace be upon him, at the prospect of losing his son Yusuf, said:

"I only complain of my suffering and my grief to Allah..."
[Qur'an, 12:86]

The following is an extract of the letter of condolence that Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, sent to his companion, Mu'adh Ibn Jabal, may Allah be pleased with him, when his child passed away. The Prophet, peace be upon him, consoled and advised Mu'adh to accept the will of Allah and to look at the time he had spent with his child as a precious gift.

“Surely, our souls, wealth and families are wonderful gifts from Allah which He has loaned to us so that we may take benefit from them for a set period; and He takes them away after the termination of that period. Thus, gratitude becomes binding upon us when He gives, and patience becomes obligatory upon us when He takes away.

Your son was also from among the wonderful gifts (of Allah) and a loan (from Him); and now, in return for great reward, mercy and forgiveness providing you exercise patience, He has taken him away from you.

So do exercise patience and do not let your bewailing and complaining destroy your reward, for you will be sorry (if this happens). Know that bewailing and complaining does not help bring back anything, nor does it repel grief and sorrow. And whatever is to happen is set to happen. May you be in peace.” [AtTabarani]

Mothers’ experiences

“Talking to people who have gone through similar experiences and sharing their thoughts makes me feel less lonely. Talking to people and letting it out makes me feel at ease, rather than keeping it locked up inside.” - Umm Fatima

“I found it very helpful to talk to a Shaykh... he helped me to understand where my son was and answered my questions clearly with references to the Qur’an and Sunnah.” - Umm Rayaah

“Counselling has really helped me. As a mother with children still at home, a husband, parents and family who remain, you may need counselling to move on. You don’t realise that you need to be able to ‘feel’ the grief or express it productively in an Islamic manner.” - Umm Ruqaiyah



Write down 2 benefits of Expressing your Feelings & Emotions



Expressing feelings and emotions is only natural during bereavement. I know the pain I feel is not a sign of weakness but is normal. It is how I deal with the pain that is important.



5. *Developing a Support Network*

“And keep yourself patient (by being) with those who call upon their Lord in the morning and in the evening, seeking His countenance.”

[Qur'an, 18:28]

When you feel pain, reaching out to others and accepting support can be difficult. Despite the difficulty, however, it is important to seek out those people who encourage you, acknowledge your feelings and help you to move forward with your grief. You may want to isolate yourself as you feel that there is no one else who can comprehend your grief, and you may be right, but one of Satan's greatest tricks is to isolate us in times of hardship. We are most vulnerable to his whisperings when we are alone, and this whispering can come in many forms. Be aware of this and surround yourself with righteous people who help you move forward, remind you of patience and encourage you to find solace in Allah.

Furthermore, be kind to yourself! Do not judge yourself for being grief-stricken or think of yourself as being weak for needing help. If your grief feels too much to bear, talk to a therapist or a grief counsellor. There are many Muslim women in this field who can help you work through these emotions and negative feelings. Joining a support group and sharing your sorrow with others who have experienced a similar loss may be of help as well.

At Children of Jannah, we want you to know that you are not alone. There is no need to suffer in silence. By keeping in touch with us, you can find peace in the knowledge that there are others who have been in your shoes, looking out for you and ready to help. Through us, you can connect with other Muslim mothers who have experienced the death of a child. Sharing your sorrow does not necessarily take the pain away, but it can lessen the burden of loneliness.

Mothers' experiences

"I found it beneficial to talk to someone who helped me stay positive. Finding the right person, a family member or close friend, to share feelings and emotions with eased the day-to-day stress."

- Umm Rayaana

"It helped me to surround myself with those who remind you of your purpose in this world as a Muslim." - Umm Zaynab



Write down 2 benefits of Developing a Support Network



A support network allows me to reach out to other people, even if I don't feel like it.



6 . Starting a Journal

"If you hear a voice within you saying 'you cannot paint', then by all means paint, and that voice will be silenced. In the same way, we can all write." [Van Gogh]

Journal Therapy is the act of writing down thoughts and feelings. Journal writing helps you to identify internal judgements and beliefs about yourself and the circumstances around the death of your child. It can be seen as a halal alternative to venting feelings of anger, frustration and guilt. Bereaved parents often fear writing about their loss, because it acts as a reminder of death. Recognising the loss, feeling its pain, and expressing one's thoughts can be the first steps towards healing.

There are numerous benefits to starting and maintaining a journal during the process of grieving. Some are listed here:

- The act of writing things down takes a load off your shoulders, allowing you to express, clarify and organise your feelings
- Gain valuable insights into yourself
- Trigger happy memories of your child – joyful memories can become more precious and more real as you preserve memories of your child in writing
- Track patterns – identify when you most feel grieved allowing you to solve problems more effectively
- Move forward by resolving internal conflicts (e.g. 'if I did this, would my child still be here?')
- Reduce stress – uncover buried stress, enabling you to clean up your energy
- Positively impact your physical wellbeing by reducing internal baggage

- Allow your creative juices to flow even if you feel you are not a writer. Remember it is the act of writing that is important, not how pretty or correct the words sound
- Compare journals from different periods in your life and see the progress you have made in dealing with your loss

Here are some ways to get you started:

- Visit your favourite paper store and purchase a cheerful journal and a good pen
- Write down an inspirational quote, maybe from this ebook, which you have enjoyed. Start writing down what it means to you
- Write down how you are feeling right now
- Write down the things you want to say to Allah, your own supplications and allow yourself time to pour your heart out to Allah
- Write down the things you are grateful for. This is important as you do not want to turn your journal into a cupboard of negative feelings

Mothers' experiences

"I would write down sometimes how I felt about losing my son and that would help lighten my heart a little." - Umm Sa'ad

"I found contributing to this ebook therapeutic. By writing my feelings and thoughts about my loss, it allowed me to appreciate the fact that, as a Muslim, I have the answers to get through this hardship. Writing it down meant I could see my thoughts and feelings on paper and then decide how I was going to help myself move forward"
- Umm Ruqaiyah



Write down 2 benefits of Starting a Journal



Starting a Journal has inspired me to write down my emotions as a way to releasing the pain associated with them.



7. *Writing Letters*

“Although the world is full of suffering, it is full also of the overcoming of it.” [Helen Keller]

Even though your child is no longer with you, a mother’s relationship with her child is always ongoing.

Writing to your child

Writing a letter to your child helps you emotionally relocate your child in Jannah, allowing you to adjust to an environment without them. Adapting to the loss in this way will help create a mind shift, enabling you to move forward and establish a lasting connection to the final abode, Jannah.

My dear, sweet child

Your passing has left me heartbroken and sad. I feel empty now that you’re no longer here. I will always cherish my time with you. I spend endless hours thinking about you, the moments we shared and the blessing you have been in my life. I love you for all time. I miss you so much, more than words can ever describe.

I am so grateful to Allah for choosing me to conceive you, allowing my body to carry you and enabling my womb to give birth to you. How I long to hug you, hold you tight and feel your delicate body against mine. I often find myself dreaming about you. I can hear your radiant laughter, feel your tenderness and see you playing with your toys. We were together for such a short time but my memories of you will never fade.

I will always remember the little things often taken for granted - picking you up after you had fallen, tucking you in bed at night, warming your milk, bathing you in the mornings.

You are my personal, treasured gift from Allah. Although I know you are no longer with me, I yearn to cradle you in my arms and look into your beautiful face, your gentle eyes looking back at me. How I wish I was with you right now, hand-in-hand discovering your new home, Jannah. Tell me about your new home. What is it like? How does it smell? In which garden do you play? Who are your new friends? From which tree do you eat? Of which fountain do you drink? Who looks after you?

I can't wait to see you my love. You are my bridge to the hereafter. Every time I think of Jannah now, I think of you. I know that He who loaned you to me and allowed me to love you, loves us both more than we know. I long to be reunited with you for eternity.

Your Mummy

Your child writing to you

Another aspect to writing letters is receiving a reply from your child. This can be a way for you to find solace through their peace and contentment. As a mother, you knew your child better than anyone. What would your child say to you now, having departed from this world? How would your child express their love and appreciation for you? How would your child give you hope to carry on? What advice would your child give to you in order for you to secure your place in Jannah alongside them?

Dear Mummy,

I love you forever and ever. Even though we are separated, the bond that we share is real and cannot be broken. You are, and will always be, my beautiful mummy.

I am at peace in my beautiful new home, Jannah. There is no pain or sorrow here, only peace and tranquillity. I am never bored nor tired, but calm and serene. I can't wait to show you around. I'll be waiting at the gates for you, excited to hold your hand and take you on a tour. I'll wear my best clothes and pick the prettiest flower for you. You'll be amazed!

It's so beautiful here. I have made lots of new friends and play with them all day long. Everybody is happy and peaceful. I've seen angels with enormous wings and other things you've never seen nor imagined. The trees and buildings are made of gold and silver. I climb trees, huge trees, and when I get to the top I can jump off without hurting myself. The earth and the leaves are more bouncy than the springiest mattress. The houses are huge with enormous gardens, and the soil smells nice too!

There are so many wonderful fruits that I can pick from my garden, all so ripe that the first bite is softer than butter and they taste sweeter than honey. I still eat candies, Mummy, but it's okay – these ones don't cause cavities. As for drinks, there are streams flowing with milk whose smell and taste does not change, and rivers abundant with fresh water, and rivers of honey that is purer than pure. Jannah is everything you could ever ask for and more.

Mummy, please be really good in your life so you can be with me. I can't wait to see you again. You're the one who patiently carried me for 9 long months enduring the sickness that pregnancy brings. You gave birth to me and brought me into the world. You tenderly fed me when I was hungry and spent endless nights comforting me in the cradle of your arms. You raised me with the best values. You comforted me when I was sad and gently wiped away my tears when I felt pain. You carefully planned for my future and did your best for me in every way. Please do not be angry or sad because Allah is looking after me.

Your child



Write down 2 benefits of Writing Letters

- ☒ *Writing letters allows me to express my love and longing for my child, so that I can focus on the moment I see him/her again, insha Allah.*



8 . Visualising Jannah

“Visualisation is daydreaming with a purpose.” [Bo Bennett]

Visualisation is a powerful tool that can help you emotionally relocate your deceased child thereby helping you to move forward. By creating strong images in your mind of your child in Jannah, you are making Jannah ‘real’ so that it becomes a goal to be achieved. If you can see the dream of Jannah realised, you can also visualise the bridge that will get you there. Relaxing your body and mind by taking deep breaths should help you achieve a state where your perception is cleared. The following is a technique that works best if someone you trust reads each step to you slowly and clearly. Alternatively, you can record yourself saying the steps and play the recording whenever you need.

*Clear your mind of clutter. Empty your lungs
Breathe in slowly over 8 seconds. Hold your breath for 2 seconds.
Breathe out slowly over 8 seconds. Repeat thrice.*

Close your eyes and begin to visualise...

*Your child is in Jannah
Beautiful, happy, peaceful, serene
Pain free*

A tour of Jannah for you...

*Smell the fragrant breeze
See the blue skies
Feel the beautiful green grass
Inhale the musk and saffron exuding from the soil*

*Touch the rocks of pearls and jewels
Gardens beneath which rivers flow
Hear and see the gushing rivers of milk, wine, honey and water
Bathe in fountains flowing with freshness
Walk past buildings and trees of gold and silver
Taste fruits softer than butter, sweeter than honey
Experience the texture of leaves softer than cloth*

*Meet children of all ages and races playing happily
Send greetings of peace to angels spreading their wings glorifying their Creator*

*Explore tents like concealed pearls 60 miles long
Wear clothes of silk and gold
Sleep in beds with blankets of the finest silk*

Peace eternal, love everlasting

Mothers' experiences

"I find it helps me to visualise my son in Jannah and the look on his face when I will see him again. I imagine that he will be running towards me from a wonderful garden; I can picture holding him again and talking to him about what he has been doing." - Umm Rayaah

"When you know that your son is in a certain place, you will do everything you can to get there. That's what I must do to be with my son, Tariq. Get to know Allah, obey Him, and study the path to Jannah in order to be reunited with my son." - Umm Tariq

"It's the best feeling in the world; nothing matters to me anymore other than this. He is safe, happy and awaits my return, the thoughts of being reunited with my son gives me much patience."

- Umm Adam L

"It's solace in knowing that my son is in the company of Prophet Ibraheem, peace be upon him, and the angels." - Umm Sa'ad

"I love to visualise my Abderrahman in a beautiful garden, dressed in lovely green clothes. The thought is quite special."

- Umm Abderrahman

"It helps me to visualise my son as a nine year old and not as a baby. I often wonder what he looks like now" - Umm Bilaal



Write down 2 benefits of Visualising Jannah



Visualisation helps me to picture the bliss of Jannah to come, insha Allah, making it real and achievable.



9 . *Looking after Yourself*

"If the body be feeble, the mind will not be strong."

[Thomas Jefferson]

The pain and heartache of losing a child puts a huge strain on the mind and body. Feelings of deep loss, emptiness and sadness can leave you fatigued and withdrawn. Energy levels may also be affected. By looking after your emotional and physical well-being, you will be able to deal better with the stresses and changes that occur during bereavement. The following are useful ways for you to help yourself through the grieving process:

1. Rest

Get plenty of rest. Sleeping not only rejuvenates the body, but also allows the mind to make sense of what has happened during the day. You will naturally feel more tired and want to sleep more during times of sadness. Everyday situations will be more demanding and this will increase the amount of sleep you need. Balance your sleep with interaction with others and spend some time outdoors.

2. Exercise

Regular exercise releases tension and stress. The following are some tips to help you:

- Deep breathing and stretching exercises when you feel tense during the day
- A brisk walk or a slow jog for about 20 minutes every couple of days
- Spending some time in the gym to remove you from familiar surroundings

3. Diet

Eating a healthy, balanced and varied diet enables the body to gain the essential vitamins, minerals and nutrients it needs to function effectively. This is particularly important during the grieving process. Here are some tips to keep your body feeling healthy:

- Drink plenty of water regularly
- Eat 5 pieces of fruit or vegetables a day
- Eat nourishing snack foods
- Refrain from eating sugary or fatty foods and from over eating which can make you feel bloated and nauseated
- Drink 'talbin', a broth resembling milk, made from flour or bran to which honey is added. *"Talbin warms the heart of a sick person and alleviates some of a person's grief"*
[AlBukhari].

Mothers' experiences

"Good nutrition and quality exercise will improve your concentration in your prayer, your worship and your relationships."
- Umm Sa'ad

"It took me a year to start caring about myself again. During the first months the best thing to do is to rest as much you can."
- Umm Mikaaal

"I would advise couples to go away for a while if they have the chance, so that they can talk openly about their child's death and be there for each other." - Umm Rayaana

"For me, after Abderrahman passed away, I decided to set myself some projects to keep myself busy. I started doing regular exercise and light weights to strengthen my body and became a bit obsessed in the garden. For some reason connecting with nature gave me such peace." - Umm Abderrahman



Write down 2 benefits of Looking After Yourself



Looking after myself physically, keeping active and eating and resting well, is just as important as my emotional well being.



10. Being Kind to Others

“Part of that great reward in helping others is the relief from worry, distress, troubles.” [Shaykh Muhammad Salih AlMunajjid]

Being kind, supportive and helpful to others in a similar situation can help put your loss in perspective. Listening to another’s pain and supporting them to find peace can bring comfort to your own heart. It is through empathy that the beautiful qualities of a human connection are demonstrated.

“Grief knits two hearts in closer bonds than happiness ever can; and common sufferings are far stronger links than common joys.”
[Alphonse de Lamartine]

There are many benefits to being kind to others. Helping others can help you to accept and see your own situation in a more positive light. You often come across those who have been tested with worse than you. This helps you to be grateful for what you have, rather than drowning in sorrow for what you have lost. Gratitude is your lifebuoy, so adorn it. You are also making a difference to someone in their hour of need. Your helpful acts leave other mothers more content and at peace with their new reality, and this may lead them to acts that cause them to enter Jannah, allowing you to share in that reward.

“Allah is kind and He loves kindness, and confers upon kindness which He does not confer upon severity, and does not confer upon anything besides it (kindness).” [Muslim]

Some ways of supporting others:

- Sharing your experience by making a phone call to someone in a similar situation
- Writing an article to a blog or newspaper
- Contributing to forums and online support groups, (e.g. the Children of Jannah Facebook page)
- Writing letters of condolence to someone who has lost a child and sending words of encouragement
- Offering help in completing daily tasks: e.g. 'Can I help you with the shopping?', 'May I run any errands for you?', 'Could I pick up the children from school?'

Mothers' experiences

"Help others who are going through hardship. This will remind you of Allah and that there is ALWAYS someone else who is going through some sort of hardship in the world. Remind them that Allah is always near. Remind them of Allah's Mercy and Love, because it reminds you too." - Umm Ruqaiyah.

"By helping others in a similar situation, it has helped me to realise that there are people in a worse situation than me. I am now able to support other mothers by empathising with them and helping them to move from their heartache much quicker than I did. I remind them about the hereafter and how we are only in this world for a short time and that Allah tests those He loves. And that Allah's promise is real and there is something better waiting for us in Jannah insha Allah." - Umm Zaynab



Write down 2 benefits of Being Kind to Others



Being kind by helping and supporting other parents who have lost a child, puts my child's loss into perspective



11 . *Living in Hope*

"Living in hope and adopting a positive attitude can transform harmful stress into a positive, motivating force." [Hafizah Ismail]

"Strange is the affair of a believer - for there is good in every affair of his and this is not the case with anyone else, except in the case of a believer; for if he has an occasion to feel delight, he thanks (God), thus there is a good for him in it; and if he gets into trouble and shows resignation (and endures it patiently), there is a good for him in it." [Muslim]

It takes courage to attempt to conceive again if your previous conception has ended in a miscarriage, stillbirth, or death. It is perfectly natural to feel nervous or a sense of anxiety about planning another pregnancy. Some bereaved couples may feel guilty because a new infant may be seen as a 'replacement' for their previous child. This is certainly not the case as no child can be 'replaced.' Each individual child is a gift and blessing from Allah and should be regarded as such.

"So lose not heart, nor fall into despair: For you must gain mastery if you are true in Faith."
[Qur'an, 3:139]

Having a positive attitude and living in hope is essential in such circumstances. It is not easy for individuals in difficult situations to think positively, but hope often brings optimism with it, making it easier to avoid unnecessary worry, anxiety and negative thoughts about conceiving.

"My Lord bestow unto me offspring, truly You hear supplication."
[Qur'an, 3:38]

Here you find an example of the exemplary patience and hope of the companions, may Allah be pleased with them:

Abu Talha, a companion of Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, had a son who became very ill. Each day, Abu Talha, may Allah be pleased with him, would return home and ask his wife about the health of their son. Then one day, their son passed away while Abu Talha was not at home. When his wife realised their son had passed away, she washed, shrouded and placed his body somewhere in the house. Upon returning home, Abu Talha asked about his son's condition. His wife did not want to burden her husband with the pain of their child's passing when he had just returned from a hard day's work, so she explained that their son was in peace. She beautified herself, prepared food for him, saw to his needs and slept with Abu Talha that night.

In the morning she informed Abu Talha about the death of their son. When Abu Talha informed the Prophet, peace be upon him of what happened to them, Allah's Messenger, peace be upon him, said, *"May Allah bless you both concerning your night (that is, may Allah bless you both with good offspring)." And indeed, Allah blessed Abu Talha and his wife with nine sons, all of whom became reciters of the Qur'an.* [AlBukhari]

Write down 2 benefits of Living in Hope

☒ *Living in hope has taught me that having another child is not an attempt to replace the child who was lost.*



Final Thoughts...

We have come to the end of our journey and I pray it has been a fruitful one. I pray you have taken benefit and you have come closer to peace. Remember, healing takes more than just time; it must be coupled with action and resolve.

It is important to remember that embracing your life again does not mean you have forgotten your child, or miss them any less. Rather, it means that you have accepted their death as only a temporary separation between you both, knowing that you will be reunited in Jannah, insha Allah, where you will never suffer separation again.

DO not allow grief to be your constant companion. Rather, use it to remember that Allah does not take something away from you, or put you through a trial, except that He gives you something better in return.

Dear Mother, do not despair. Live with full knowledge that Allah tests you because He loves you. I ask Allah to bless you with beautiful patience in the face of your loss and to compensate you with something better in this world and the next.

As Allah says:

“And whosoever fears Allah and keeps his duty to Him, He will make a way for him to get out (from every difficulty).” [Qur'an, 65:2]

Look forward to the day when you will be reunited with your child, insha Allah. I pray that through your remembrance of Allah, peace descends upon you, and that the hardship that you face now will be overcome with a lasting ease. Ameen.

When my 2 year old nephew passed away in April 2011 following a period of illness, I met many Muslim couples who had also experienced losing a child, either to illness, miscarriage or still birth. After talking to bereaved parents and families, and learning from my own experience, I came to realise the need for an organisation to help Muslims who are grieving the loss of a child.

Children of Jannah was launched in May 2011 and is the only organisation created to exclusively support Muslim families. Children of Jannah offers support based on the Qur'an and Sunnah, through providing articles, books, webinars, videos, coaching and online social groups on Twitter and Facebook (www.facebook.com/ChildrenofJannah). Thousands have found our Facebook page as a source of peace, allowing them to harness their child's memory in a positive way. We also have a closed Facebook group especially for mothers. If you would like to join this group, please email info@ChildrenofJannah.com

Sorrow to Serenity provides 11 powerful ways to help a mother find peace through the pain of child loss. I draw on my experience as a life coach and speaker to outline spiritual and practical steps based on Islamic teachings that equip grieving mothers with the tools to move from heartache to happiness.

No book ever gets written without the help of the many people who work behind the scenes to get work done. These people point the author in the right direction, give invaluable advice, educate and encourage. In the course of writing this ebook, the individuals I have spoken with have been unfailingly generous with their knowledge and time. In particular, I would like to sincerely thank each and every mother who has contributed to this ebook. Your strength has been the inspiration behind this ebook and without your generosity, this ebook would not be possible. I thank you for trusting me with your time and your stories.

