

HEALING THE LOVE
YOU NEEDED BUT NEVER RECEIVED

The Mother Hunger

HEALING THE LOVE YOU
NEEDED BUT NEVER RECEIVED

*"And We have enjoined
upon man [care] for his
parents. His mother
carried him in hardship
and gave birth to him
in hardship..."*

— QUR'AN 46:15



HEALING
THROUGH
QUR'AN, SUNNAH
& SELF-WORTH



HEAL OLD
WOUNDS



REPARANT
YOUR HEART



FIND YOUR
SELF-WORTH



BREAK CYCLES
WITH LOVE



GROW CLOSER
TO ALLAH

TAHOOR PUBLISHERS

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Qur'anic meanings and hadith translations are the author's renderings, presented for reflection. Readers are encouraged to return to the original sources and qualified scholars for precise wording and rulings.

This book offers compassionate, faith-based reflection on emotional healing. It is not a substitute for professional mental-health care, therapy, or medical advice. If you are struggling with the effects of trauma, abuse, neglect, depression, anxiety, or thoughts of harming yourself, please reach out to a qualified mental-health professional and to people you trust. Seeking help is an act of courage and strength, fully in keeping with placing your trust in Allah.

First edition.

*For the child who waited to be seen —
you always were.*



حملته أمه كرها ووضعته كرها

*“His mother carried him in hardship and gave birth to him in
hardship.”*

Sūrah al-Aḥqāf 46:15

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INTRODUCTION

The Ache That Never Left



There is an ache that some people carry their whole lives without ever knowing its name. It is there in the quiet after everyone has gone to sleep. It is there in the strange hollowness that follows even good days. It is there when you watch a mother stroke her child's hair and feel something tighten in your chest that you cannot quite explain. You may have a successful life, a family of your own, people who love you — and still, underneath it all, there is a child inside you who is still waiting for something that never came. If you have felt that ache, this book was written for you. And the first thing I want you to know, before anything else, is that you are not broken, you are not ungrateful, and you are not alone.

This ache has a name. It is sometimes called the mother wound, or mother hunger — the deep, often unspoken longing left behind when the love, warmth, safety, or emotional presence we needed from our mothers did not fully arrive. Maybe your mother was physically there but emotionally somewhere else, distracted, depressed, or overwhelmed by her own pain. Maybe she was critical, and you grew up feeling you could never be enough. Maybe she compared you to a



sibling, or overlooked you, or leaned on you as though you were the adult. Maybe she left, through divorce or death or simply through her own inability to stay present. Or maybe nothing dramatic happened at all — there was just a coldness, an absence, a love that was supposed to be there and somehow never reached you.

Whatever shape it took, the wound is real, even if no one ever validated it. And here is the painful truth that makes mother hunger so hard to heal: a mother's love is the first love we ever know, the template against which we measure safety, worth, and belonging for the rest of our lives. When that first love is missing or wounded, the effects do not stay in childhood. They follow us. They shape how we see ourselves, how we love and are loved, how much we feel we deserve, the voice we hear in our own heads, and even, sometimes, how we relate to Allah. Many people spend decades managing the symptoms of a wound they have never named — the anxiety, the people-pleasing, the fear of abandonment, the relentless inner critic, the sense of never being quite enough — without ever realising where it began.

I want to be gentle and honest with you from the start. This book will not ask you to pretend the love was there when it was not. It will not rush you to forgive before you have grieved, or shame you for the anger or the sorrow you may carry. Real healing does not come from denial; it comes from finally telling the truth about what you needed and did not receive, and then slowly, compassionately, learning to give yourself — and to receive from Allah — what was missing. We will walk through that journey together, step by step, with no pretending and no judgement.

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And there is a source of comfort here deeper than any human reassurance, woven through the very story of the one we love most. The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ knew the ache of a missing mother. His father died before he was born; his mother, Āminah, died when he was only six years old, leaving him an orphan twice over. He grew up without the very thing this book is about. And when, as a grown man, he felt most alone and abandoned, Allah comforted him not by pretending his losses had not happened, but by reminding him that he had been seen, held, and provided for all along:

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ألم يجدك يتيما فآوى ۖ ووجدك ضالاً فهدى ۖ
ووجدك عائلاً فأغنى

“Did He not find you an orphan and give you shelter? And He found you lost and guided you. And He found you in need and made you self-sufficient.”

Sūrah aḍ-Ḍuḥā 93:6–8

Read those words slowly, because they were spoken to a motherless child who became the most beloved of all creation, and they are spoken, in their spirit, to you. Allah *found* him — He saw the orphan no one else could fully comfort, and He sheltered him. The absence in his childhood did not place him outside of Allah's care; it placed him directly within it. And the same is true for you. Whatever you did not receive from your mother, you were never outside the sight, the knowledge, or the mercy of the One who created you and her both — the One whose love does not depend on anyone's ability to give it, and who has been with you in every moment you felt most unseen.



So this is where we begin. Not with blame, and not with denial, but with the truth — and with hope. The ache you have carried is real, but it is not a life sentence. The wound you did not choose does not have to define the rest of your story. Over the chapters ahead, we will name what happened, grieve what was missing, understand where it came from, and learn — practically and spiritually — how to give the inner child within you the safety, compassion, and belonging it always deserved. And through all of it, we will turn toward Allah, the One who saw the child nobody saw, whose love is the love that was never missing and never will be. The healing you have longed for is possible. Let us begin, together, and gently.



CHAPTER ONE

The First Love We Ever Needed

Why a mother's love shapes everything

“His mother carried him in hardship and gave birth to him in hardship.”

— Sūrah al-Aḥqāf 46:15

Before you had words, you had a need. Long before you could name anything, you knew — in the wordless language of the body — whether you were safe, whether you were wanted, whether the world would respond when you cried. A newborn cannot feed itself, cannot soothe itself, cannot survive a single day alone. It comes into the world utterly dependent, and it learns its very first lessons about existence from one primary source: the arms that hold it. In those earliest moments, a mother is not just a caregiver. She is the infant's entire world — the first face, the first warmth, the first answer to the terrifying question every human being is born asking: *Am I safe? Am I loved? Will someone come?*

This is why a mother's love shapes everything. It is not sentimentality to say so; it is how human beings are built. When a

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child cries and a loving caregiver responds — with warmth, with comfort, with presence — the child learns something profound that settles into the foundation of their being: *I matter. My needs are valid. The world is safe. I am not alone.* This is what psychologists call secure attachment, and it becomes the invisible template for everything that follows: the ability to trust, to feel worthy, to be close to others without fear, to soothe oneself in distress, to believe one is fundamentally lovable. The first love teaches us whether love itself can be relied upon.

Islam honours the towering significance of the mother in a way few traditions match. Allah ties care for the mother directly to gratitude toward Him, and points specifically to what she endured in bringing us into the world:

ووصينا الإنسان بوالديه إحسانا حملته أمه كرها
ووضعته كرها

“And We have enjoined upon man, to his parents, good treatment. His mother carried him with hardship and gave birth to him with hardship.”

Sūrah al-Aḥqāf 46:15

And in another verse, Allah describes the mother's sacrifice as hardship layered upon hardship — *weakness upon weakness* — the depleting work of carrying, birthing, and nursing a child. The Prophet ﷺ was once asked who among all people is most deserving of our good companionship, and he answered, *your mother*. The questioner asked



again, and again he said, *your mother*. A third time — *your mother*. Only on the fourth did he say, *your father*. Three times the mother, before anyone else. This is the weight Islam places on the maternal bond, precisely because of how foundational, how sacrificial, and how irreplaceable that first love is meant to be.

But here is where the ache begins for so many. Because the maternal bond is so foundational, its absence or its wounding leaves a correspondingly deep mark. When the first love is missing — when the arms were cold, or distracted, or critical, or simply not emotionally present — the child does not conclude, *my mother was struggling*. A small child cannot think that way. Instead, the child concludes something about *itself*: *I am too much. I am not enough. My needs are a burden. I am not worth coming for*. These early, wordless conclusions do not announce themselves. They sink beneath conscious memory and become the silent assumptions we carry into adulthood — the lens through which we will, for decades, interpret ourselves and every relationship we enter.

Understanding this is not about blaming your mother, and it is not about excusing what happened. It is about *understanding the size of the wound* — about giving yourself permission to recognise that what was missing was not a small thing. If you have spent your life minimising it, telling yourself it was not that bad, that others had it worse, that you should just be grateful — I want to gently invite you to stop minimising. The first love we ever need is enormous precisely because Allah designed it to be the soil in which a human soul first takes root. When that soil was thin or rocky, it is no small thing. It explains so much. And naming its true size, without exaggeration and without denial, is the first honest step toward healing what grew — or struggled to grow — in its absence.