

Special Issue

MOTIVATED

THE MAGAZINE THAT MOVES YOU!

A WELL IN THE DESERT

Turning trials into triumphs

The Voice on the Phone

God's care in time of trouble

Hidden Rewards

You never lose by giving



Fatimah and the Egg
Little things are important.....3

A Well in the Desert
Turning trials into triumphs.....4

The Voice on the Phone
God’s care in time of trouble.....5

On Eagle’s Wings.....6

The Unseen Blossoms
Our efforts are never wasted.....6

**Give and It Shall Be
Given to You!**
A legend.....7

Marwan’s Story
Life is like a boomerang.....8

The Sunbird’s Nest
A picture of peace.....10

Hidden Rewards
You never lose by giving.....11

Editor:
Christina Lane
Souad Abuhalm
Design:
Jon Archer

Please contact us at:

Visit us at:
www.motivatedmagazine.com
Email:
motivated@motivatedmagazine.com

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Special occasions such as Ramadan and Eid, are times to pause and reflect on our own lives, as well as on the lives and needs of others. It is a time when we are encouraged to especially look out for those who struggle through difficult times or have experienced loss, and to try to do something, or give extra to encourage and help those who lack.

The knowledge of God’s constant help and care in times of trouble is always a wonderful assurance. It renews our faith and gives us strength and courage to face our circumstances. Sharing such comforting thoughts with those who suffer is one way to express our concern and can have a wonderfully uplifting effect on those around us. There are, of course, numerous other ways to express our concern for others in need also.

With this in mind, we compiled a number of true-to-life stories and articles which we hope will be an inspiration and source of hope, faith, and courage during this special season—for you personally, and for those around you that may need some words of encouragement as well.

From all of us at *Motivated*, we wish you Ramadan Mubarak and Happy Eid!

Christina Lane
For *Motivated*

Fatimah and the Egg

Little things are important

Fatimah was a school teacher in a small village. In her school there was another teacher whom she did not like and get along with very well. But after some time she felt something inside her telling her that these bad feelings were wrong. Fatimah had learned to listen to this “inner voice” because she knew it came from God, so she decided to obey it.

“But what can I do?” she wondered.

“Give her an egg,” was the thought that came. “What a foolish idea,” she thought. “Just one egg? The teacher might feel insulted at such a present! A dozen eggs, now that would be different, but just one egg!”

She put the thought out of her mind and went off to her day’s teaching.

But when she came home in the evening, there on the chair in her room sat a hen. It cackled, flew down—and there was an egg!

Fatimah remembered her thought about giving an egg to the other teacher.—And now the egg was even supplied!

Somewhat reluctantly, she picked it up and set off for the teacher’s house.

This teacher was married and had several children, and one of them, a little boy, was outside the house when Fatimah approached. She was glad to see him—it was easier to give the egg to him.

“Will you give this egg to your mother, please?” she asked, “It is for her.”

The next day the teacher came to Fatimah. “What made you give me that egg?” she asked. “It was so nice and fresh!”

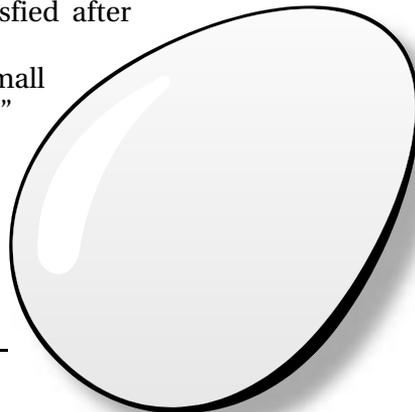
Fatimah told her about being sorry for her bad feelings, and about the thought she had had of what to do about them.

“That is amazing”, said the other teacher. “God must have known that we had so little food in the house that when everyone had had some, there was none left for me. That was when your egg came! I was so happy and satisfied after eating it!”

Fatimah seemed to have given such a small thing, but it amazed her how that “small” thing had affected the life of another.

Even the smallest kind deed, when it comes from a loving and caring heart, can make a big difference in the lives of others. ☒

It’s not the things that can be bought that are life’s richest treasure. It is the little gifts of heart that money cannot measure.



A Well in the Desert

Turning trials into triumphs

Most people pass through hardships and a valley of tears during some time in their life. We feel like we're passing through a dry and dusty desert, which can seem bigger to us than any geography, and larger than any place on a map.

But even those dry and dusty places we pass through are for a purpose, as the elderly man taught a boy who went with him into the woods to cut down some hickory trees to make ax handles.

When they came to several young hickory trees the boy said, "These trees would make good ax handles. Let's cut them down."

The old man said, "These trees in the lowlands have been protected from the storms which rage higher up. Let's go to the heights where the trees have been rocked back and forth by fierce winds. Those trees have

been hardened by the tempest and they will make much stronger ax handles!"

No matter how great our sorrow or how difficult the hardship, if we can believe that God has allowed them for a purpose, then we can turn even the most dry and difficult circumstances into a well of opportunity and turn it into a blessing, as illustrated in the following anecdote.

One morning as a nurse neared the hospital where she worked, she noticed a frail, stooped, elderly man hurrying in the same direction. She wondered where he was going in such a hurry and at such an early hour. She also questioned whether it was safe for him to be out alone in his obviously poor state of health.

Later that day, she was surprised to see the same man walking down a corridor in the hospital. She found out he had always enjoyed helping other people, so one day he had come to the hospital and offered to work as a volunteer. He came two mornings each week to work in whatever way he was needed. He enjoyed the interaction with the staff, the patients, and their families.

By helping others, he had been able to forget his own health problems. In giving of himself, he found a new lease on life and a new reason to get up in the morning.

If we see only ourselves and our sorrow, we won't be able to transform our valley of tears into a place of strengthening and blessing, but if we look

away from ourselves to the needs of others, we will find that God can turn even seeming defeats into some of His greatest victories. ☒



God's care in time of trouble...

The Voice on the Phone

By Lynne Coates

When a tornado struck our area in April 1974, our family was at home—all but our youngest son, Camille. He was in kindergarten a few miles away.

Huddled together in our basement, we heard the rain pounding and the storm's violent roar. When the noise abated, we went upstairs, relieved to find our neighborhood untouched. But the radio said the storm had headed toward the kindergarten building.

My husband went to get Camille and I stayed at home with our two older boys. I tried to call the kindergarten, but the number did not ring. Instead I heard clicks and then the phone went dead.

"Mama," my son reported, "the radio just said the tornado went through the building and took the roof off."

Both children began to cry. With

my own fear, how could I comfort them? I thought, Only God can help me now. He's in charge.

"Boys," I said, "we're in God's hands."

Again I tried to phone. Dead! I was about to hang up when the number rang.

"Don't worry," said the woman who answered. "The children were taken to another building before the storm. They're fine." We hugged and shouted for joy.

The area around the kindergarten building had been devastated. Huge trees lay twisted on the ground; live electrical wires sparked on the wet sidewalks; homeless people wandered in a daze. But my husband found Camille safe in another building, just as the woman had said.

Later, when I went to thank the woman who'd comforted me on the phone, Camille's teacher said, "But Mrs. Lynne, you couldn't have spoken with anyone. Our phone lines were destroyed. Besides, there was no one in the building when you called." ☒

"When we put our cares in God's hands,
He puts His peace in our hearts."

On Eagle's Wings

By Michael Dooley

*Life with all its ups and downs
Is sometimes hard to take,
There are obstacles you face
That can cause your heart to break.
But when an eagle soars
into the lonely sky,
The wind that blows against him
Is the force that lifts him high.*

*Though you've been misunderstood
For the good you've tried to do,
And the battles seem so great
And the victories so few,
One day you will look back
And find to your surprise
That the times that were the hardest
Were the times you learned to fly.*

*So fly on eagle's wings,
Bravely face the wind
And let it lift you up,
Lift you far above
The mountains down below.
Leave the past behind,
Sail upon the wind,
Beyond the far horizon you will see
A realm of untold vision
That you've never known before
As you soar on eagle's wings.*



The Unseen

Blossoms

Our efforts are never wasted

A Young woman who loved flowers had planted a rare vine at the base of a stone wall. It grew heartily, but did not blossom. Day after day she cultivated and watered it, and she tried everything she could think of to coax it into blossom.

One morning as she stood looking at it in disappointment, her invalid neighbor, whose back lot was adjoined to her own, called over and said: "You cannot imagine how much I have been enjoying the blooms of that vine you planted."

The owner looked and on the other side of the wall was a mass of blossoms. The vine had crept through the crevices and flowered luxuriantly on the other side!

There is a lesson here for every one of us: So often we are tempted to think our efforts are wasted because we do not see their fruit, but we need to learn that what we do for others is never in vain. Somewhere it will bear fruit and some heart will be encouraged and receive blessing and joy from it. ☒

— Author Unknown



Give

and It Shall Be Given to You!

A Legend

According to legend, there was once an estate which had a very generous landowner. No beggar was ever turned away, and the landlord gave all he could to the needy. The strange thing was that the more he gave away, the richer the estate seemed to become.

When the old landowner died, he was replaced by a new one with exactly the opposite nature—he was mean and stingy.

One day an elderly man arrived at the estate, saying that he had stayed there years before and was seeking shelter again. The landlord turned the visitor away, saying

that the estate could no longer afford its former hospitality.

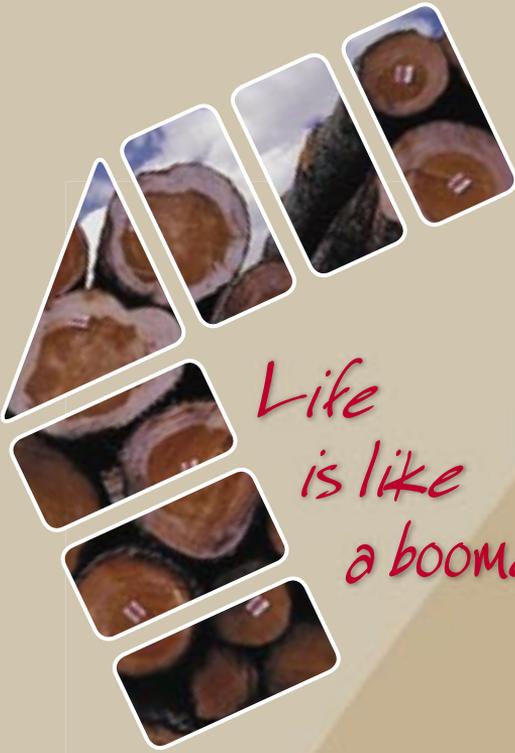
“Our estate cannot provide for strangers like it used to when we were wealthy,” he said. “No one seems to make gifts anymore nowadays.”

“Ah well,” said the stranger, “I think that is because you banished a brother from the estate.”

“I don’t think we ever did that,” said the puzzled landlord.

“Oh yes,” was the reply. “And he had a twin. The one you banished was called ‘Give’ and his twin was ‘It shall be given to you.’ You banished ‘Give,’ so his brother decided to go as well. ❧

Marwan's Story



In today's world, looking out for "number one" is often considered an attitude one needs to get ahead. But there are those who still believe in things like love, honesty, integrity, and helping a friend in need without hope for repayment. I'd like to tell you about an experience a friend of mine had over 20 years ago.

Marwan is a pleasure to be around. He has charm and a pleasant nature that draws others to him. This is his story.

Marwan was in the lumber business in Lebanon. A few years earlier he had made friends with a man named George, who was from Cyprus and owned a construction company that had building projects in several countries in the Gulf region. Although Marwan and George were in related businesses, they were not business associates at the time, just friends.

When war broke out on Cyprus, Marwan received an unexpected call. George had fled to Lebanon and

desperately needed to set up an office and make local contacts in order to continue supplying his customers in the Gulf. Marwan agreed to help.

For about three months, Marwan spent half of his work time going around with a young man from George's firm, introducing him to people who could supply George with everything he needed to keep his business going.

Many of the people that Marwan introduced the young man to would speak to Marwan in Arabic, sometimes offering him special deals and very large commissions, if Marwan would ensure that they got George's new firm's contract. Marwan always refused these offers, telling them he simply wanted them to give George their best price.

After three months, Marwan went back to his own business fulltime, but not before having received many thanks from George.

The war on Cyprus ended, and George was able to return home and continue his work from there.

The following year, war broke out in Lebanon, and Marwan was forced to flee to Cyprus.

Now struggling to keep his own company afloat, Marwan went to see George and asked

if George could give him any business. Since Marwan was an agent for a certain type of wood that George used in his construction, he presented Marwan with a very large order and asked him to think about it and come back the following day with his best price.

Marwan had never received such a big order in his life! He was overjoyed! He did his best to calculate costs carefully, came up with what he thought was a reasonable price, and took it to George the next day.

George told Marwan the price was too high, and asked him to reconsider and come back the following day with a better offer.

On his way out, Marwan stopped by to see the assistant manager, Nicos, who was also a friend of his. When Nicos heard what George had told Marwan, Nicos said, "Whatever you do, don't cut your price. Keep it the same. George will give you the contract anyway."

When Marwan went to his hotel, he didn't know what to think. Perhaps Nicos had a relative in the wood business and wanted Marwan's competition out of the way so that his relative could get the deal. But after carefully going over his costs, Marwan saw that he really couldn't lower his price any more than he had. He had arrived at a very fair price the first time.

The next day Marwan went back to George and explained that he had reconsidered, but after reviewing his costs, didn't see how he could bring the

price down any more. George agreed, and Marwan got his big order.

After finishing all the business details with George, Marwan went by to see Nicos again and asked how he had known George would give him the deal at the original price.

"Do you remember the young man you took with you when you were helping George set up his business in Lebanon?" Nicos asked. "Well, that young man had worked in several Gulf countries for years and knew Arabic. He understood clearly every time you were offered a commission, and the way you turned it down every time made an impression. He told all of this to George. So you see, you could have offered George any price and he would have given you the contract anyway, in thankfulness for your honest and unselfish help when he was in need."

Marwan was amazed. He had no idea that this young man spoke any Arabic, as he had never given any indication and had always let Marwan do all the talking. Marwan was very thankful that he had not been tempted to make any under-the-table deals at that time, because now his honesty was being repaid when he needed it most.

The war in Lebanon continued for many years, and for many years George continued to order wood from Marwan.

They say life is like a boomerang, and that all the good we do returns to us. In this case, the good was multiplied many times over. ❧

*Hardship may dishearten at first,
but every hardship passes away.
All despair is followed by hope;
all darkness is followed by sunshine.*

— Jalaluddin al-Rumi

The Sunbird's Nest

A
picture
of
peace



The sunbird – one of the tiniest of birds, native to the Subcontinent – builds a suspended nest by hanging it by four frail threads. It is a delicate work of art, with its roof and tiny porch, which a splash of water or a child's touch might destroy.

One nature lover and observer tells how she saw a little sunbird

swaying with the branches in the wind. Then she noticed that the nest had been so placed that the leaves immediately above it formed little gutters which carried the water away from the nest.

There sat the sunbird, with its tiny head resting on her little porch, and whenever a drop of water fell on her long, curved

Fence of trust...

*Build a little fence of trust around today;
Fill the space with loving deeds, and therein stay.
Look not through the sheltering bars upon tomorrow;
God will help you bear what comes of joy or sorrow.*

building such a nest just before the monsoon season started, and felt that for once bird wisdom had failed; for how could such a delicate structure, in such an exposed situation, weather the winds and the torrential rains?

The monsoon broke, and from her window she watched the nest

beak, she sucked it in as if it were nectar.

The storms raged furiously, but the sunbird sat, quiet and unafraid, hatching her tiny eggs.

We have a more substantial rest for head and heart than that little sunbird's porch! We have the promises of God! ❖

Hidden Rewards

— Adapted from McGuffey's Third Reader



Once, during a famine, a kind, rich baker sent for twenty of the poorest children in the town, and said to them, "In this basket there is a loaf for each of you. Take it, and come back to me every day at this hour till God sends us better times."

The hungry children gathered eagerly about the basket, and most quarreled over the bread, because each wished to have the largest loaf. At last they went away without even thanking the good gentleman.

But Gretchen, a poorly dressed little girl, did not quarrel or struggle with the rest, but remained standing quietly to the side. When the ill-behaved children had left, she took the smallest loaf, which alone was left in the basket, kissed the gentleman's hand, and went home.

The next day the children were as ill-behaved as before, and poor, timid Gretchen received a loaf scarcely half the size of the one she got the first day. When she went

home, and her mother cut the loaf open, many new shining pieces of silver fell out of it.

Her mother was very much alarmed, and said, "Take the money back to the good gentleman at once, for it must have gotten into the dough by accident. Be quick, Gretchen! Be quick!"

But when the little girl gave the rich man her mother's message, he said, "No, no, my child, it was no mistake. I had the silver pieces put into the smallest loaf to reward you. Always be as contented, kind, and thankful as you now are. Go home now, and tell your mother that the money is your own."

If we give to others, yield to them to make them happy, or put their wishes above our own, we can sometimes feel like we're losing out. But we're not really. God sees such unselfishness, and He will reward it. ☒

You never lose by giving.

The candle is not there to illuminate itself.

— Nawab Jan-Fishan Khan





*God, make us brave for life; oh, braver than this.
Let us straighten after pain,
as a tree straightens after the rain,
Shining and lovely again.*

*God, make us brave for life; much braver than this.
As the blown grass lifts, let us rise
From sorrow with quiet eyes,
Knowing Your way is wise.*

*God, make us brave,
life brings such blinding things.
Help us to keep our sight;
Help us to see the right
That out of dark comes light.*

— Author Unknown