

[8:53] GOD does not change a blessing He has bestowed upon any people unless they themselves decide to change. GOD is Hearer, Omniscient.

[13:11] Shifts (of angels) take turns, staying with each one of you - they are in front of you and behind you. They stay with you, and guard you in accordance with GOD's commands. Thus, GOD does not change the condition of any people unless they themselves make the decision to change. If GOD wills any hardship for any people, no force can stop it. For they have none beside Him as Lord and Master.

A 2007 study got two groups of hotel maids. The first group was given training on how their work was actually a form of exercise, and told the amount of calories miscellaneous tasks would burn. The other group was merely told the benefits of exercise. Four weeks later they found that the group of maids who were told that their work was like exercise lost more weight with an average loss of half a pound per week.

Similarly God informs us that we need to nurture and develop our souls and that we can do this by means of the Contact Prayers. By being reverent during Contact Prayers we can reap more of the benefits in other aspects of our lives.

[20:14] "I am GOD; there is no other god beside Me. You shall worship Me alone, and observe the Contact Prayers (Salat) to remember Me.

[23:1] Successful indeed are the believers;

[23:2] who are reverent during their Contact Prayers (Salat).

The Contact Prayers (Salat)

[29:45] You shall recite what is revealed to you of the scripture, and observe the Contact Prayers (Salat), for the Contact Prayers prohibit evil and vice. But the remembrance of GOD (through Salat) is the most important objective.\* GOD knows everything you do.

Sometimes we feel discouraged from change. We think we are so far away, but God makes it up to us...

[2:245] Who would lend GOD a loan of righteousness, to have it repaid to them multiplied manifold? GOD is the One who provides and withholds, and to Him you will be returned.

In another study a car wash offered coupons to its customers. To half the customers they gave a coupon where if they get 8 car washes the 9<sup>th</sup> one would be free. To the other group they gave a coupon if they get 10 car washes the 11<sup>th</sup> one would be free, but they checked off the first two car washes.

Even though both groups required a total of 8 carwashes to receive a free carwash the second group had a greater chance of finishing all their carwashes.

Almost twice of many people with the head start group actually fulfilled all 8 car washes and received a free carwash (19% to 34%)

Similarly God gives us a head start when we enter into Submission when He transforms sins into credits...

[25:70] Exempted are those who repent, believe, and lead a righteous life. GOD transforms their sins into credits. GOD is Forgiver, Most Merciful.

[25:71] Those who repent and lead a righteous life, GOD redeems them; a complete redemption.

[8:38] Tell those who disbelieved: if they stop, all their past will be forgiven. But if they return, they will incur the same fate as their previous counterparts.

A little change at a time can go a long way. When you improve a little each day, eventually big things occur...Don't look for the quick, big improvement. Seek the small improvement one day at a time.

If you were to fold a piece of paper in half 50 times how tall would it be?

The average sheet of 20lb copier paper is 0.0038 inches thick

$$2^{50} * 0.0038 \text{ inches} = 4.27841965 \times 10^{12} \text{ inches}$$

1 mile = 63 360 inches

$$(4.27841965 \times (10^{12})) / 63\,360 = 67\,525\,562.7 \text{ miles}$$

It is 240 million miles to the moon

So a piece of paper folded 50 times is about one fourth of the way to the moon.

Sometimes events happen in our life and we get despondent and frustrated, but we have to realize that God never forgets, God plans for the believers....

Despair – the feeling that everything is wrong and nothing will turn out well

There was an article of a person who got into a ship wreck and got washed ashore. In order to stay alive the person built a shelter and began searching for food. One day when he was out exploring the fire he built accidentally caused his shelter to burn down. The man got really upset and frustrated, but to his surprise a couple hours later a rescue team found him. When he asked the rescue team how they found him – they replied that they saw the fire he ignited.

We cannot look at events in our life in isolation. While we may see a cross section of our lives God sees the whole picture and we need to trust that God is planning for the believers, and not get so caught up on independent events.

For example what is the difference between being buried and being planted? When something is buried it isn't coming back it is done, gone. But, when something is being planted the expectation is that it is going to sprout it is going to grow, but for all practical purposes the two events appear identical in isolation.

A seed on a shelf does not have the potential to grow to blossom; the seed's potential is locked up until is planted in the soil. But how does it look from the perspective of the seed. It is lonely, it is dark, and people walk on top of it. It appears buried, but it is only planted. The dirt cannot hold back the seed once it is planted. The seed had to go through some dark times some lonely times, but comes out triumphant.

Jonah, Muhammad, Joseph all looked buried at one point, but all of them were actually being planted for God's elaborate plan.

Jonah

[21:87] And Zan-Noon (Jonah, "the one with an 'N' in his name"), abandoned his mission in protest, thinking that we could not control him. He ended up imploring from the darkness (of the big fish's belly): "There is no god other than You. Be You glorified. I have committed a gross sin."

[21:88] We responded to him, and saved him from the crisis; we thus save the believers.

Jonah was then sent to a community of 100,000 and they believed.

Joseph

Believers are Blessed with God's Assurances

[12:15] When they went away with him, and unanimously decided to throw him into the abyss of the well, we inspired him: "Some day, you will tell them about all this, while they have no idea."

Joseph was betrayed by his brothers, thrown into a well, sold off as a slave, and sent to jail – only to become the highest ranking individual in all of Egypt, after Pharaoh, and able to save his people from starvation.

Muhammad

### God's Invisible Soldiers

[9:40] If you fail to support him (the messenger), GOD has already supported him. Thus, when the disbelievers chased him, and he was one of two in the cave, he said to his friend, "Do not worry; GOD is with us." GOD then sent down contentment and security upon him, and supported him with invisible soldiers. He made the word of the disbelievers lowly. GOD's word reigns supreme. GOD is Almighty, Most Wise.

There is a story of a farmer who was walking one day with his donkey, when the donkey falls into a deep well. The farmer struggles to figure out how he can get the donkey out of the well and eventually gives up. In order to save the donkey from a slow death the farmer decides the best thing to do is bury the donkey in the well and put him out of its misery. The farmer gets a shovel and proceeds to throw dirt on the donkey. The donkey confused to what the farmer is doing begins to panic, but then eventually just shakes off the dirt and takes a step up. The farmer continues to shovel dirt on the donkey and the donkey continues to just shake it off and to take a step up, until it eventually works its way out of the well.

The moral of this story is when it appears that life is burying us it is best to shake it off and take a step up.

In early 1945, at the age of 23, 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Hiroo Onoda of Japan was sent with 4 officers to topple Phillipine control of the island of Lubang off the Japanese coast. WWII ended in May of 1945 yet for 29 years, from 1945 to 1974, Lt. Onoda continued fighting thinking the war was still going on.

During his reign he was shooting at villagers, killing the local livestock for food, and in one incident caused a shoot out at the police station.

In 1950 one of his troops surrendered and at that point he tried to contact Lt. Onoda to tell him the war was over, but he thought this was a trick.

They dropped letters over planes, they put leaflets on trees, they flew over the forest with loud speakers to get this guy out, but Lt. Onoda didn't believe in any of it.

Over time his three other soldiers died in battle and it was just him, and he continued to fight.

Eventually a Japanese student, Norio Suzuki, set out to find Lt. Onoda, yet Onoda still refused to accept that the war was over unless he received orders to lay down his arms from his superior officer. Suzuki offered his help, and returned to Japan with photographs of himself and Onoda as proof of their encounter. In 1974 the Japanese government located Onoda's commanding officer, Major Taniguchi, who had since become a bookseller. He flew to Lubang and informed Onoda of the defeat of Japan in WWII and ordered him to lay down his arms. Lieutenant Onoda emerged from the jungle 29 years after the end of World War II, and accepted the commanding officer's order of surrender in his dress uniform and sword, with his Arisaka Type 99 rifle still in operating condition, 500 rounds of ammunition and several hand grenades.

This guy thought it would have been better if he died in battle rather than finding out that he had wasted the last 29 years of his life for nothing.

If we think wasting 29 years of one's life to a war that doesn't exist is bad, think about the people who waste an entire life totally oblivious of the Hereafter.

[6:128] The day will come when He summons all of them (and says): "O you jinns, you have claimed multitudes of humans." Their human companions will say, "Our Lord, we enjoyed each others' company until we wasted the life span You had set for us." He will say, "Hell is your destiny." They abide therein forever, in accordance with GOD's will. Your Lord is Wise, Omniscient.

[46:20] The day will come when those who disbelieved will be introduced to the hellfire: "You have wasted the good chances given to you during your worldly life, and you rejoiced in them. Consequently, today you incur a shameful retribution as a requital for the arrogance you committed on earth without any basis, and for your evil works."

Similar to Lt. Onodo's soldier telling him the war was over God sent us messengers to tell us about the real life.

[2:151] (Blessings) such as the sending of a messenger from among you to recite our revelations to you, purify you, teach you the scripture and wisdom, and to teach you what you never knew.

[65:11] a messenger\* who recites to you GOD's revelations, clearly, to lead those who believe and work righteousness out of the darkness into the light. Anyone who believes in GOD and leads a righteous life, He will admit him into gardens with flowing streams; they abide therein forever. GOD will generously reward him.

Similar to the leaflets that they posted on the trees telling Lt. Onodo the war is over, God gave us scriptures telling us the truth.

[7:52] We have given them a scripture that is fully detailed, with knowledge, guidance, and mercy for the people who believe

[23:66] My proofs have been presented to you, but you turned back on your heels.

[23:67] You were too arrogant to accept them, and you defiantly disregarded them.

[23:68] Why do they not reflect upon this scripture? Do they not realize that they have received something never attained by their ancestors?

[23:69] Have they failed to recognize their messenger? Is this why they are disregarding him?

[23:70] Have they decided that he is crazy? Indeed, he has brought the truth to them, but most of them hate the truth.

[8:22] The worst creatures in the sight of GOD are the deaf and dumb, who do not understand.

[6:25] Some of them listen to you, but we place veils on their hearts to prevent them from understanding, and deafness in their ears. Thus, no matter what kind of proof they see, they cannot believe. Thus, when they come to argue with you, the disbelievers say, "These are tales from the past."

[7:146] I will divert from My revelations those who are arrogant on earth, without justification. Consequently, when they see every kind of proof they will not believe. And when they see the path of guidance they will not adopt it as their path, but when they see the path of straying they will adopt it as their path. This is the consequence of their rejecting our proofs, and being totally heedless thereof.

[10:97] No matter what kind of proof you show them, (they cannot believe), until they see the painful retribution.

Some people ask why is God so harsh with the realities of the potential consequences that can occur to those in the Hereafter. The reason is God does not shy away from the truth.

I was listening to a radio show that was interviewing a doctor. In a response to a question the doctor indicated that doctors don't shy away from being straight forward and delivering the "bad" news. This is because they need to tell people the truth. Not because they want to be gloomy. Because if they don't tell the truth then who will – their friends / family?

Similarly God does not shy away from telling the truth and letting His servants know the Truth and severity of this matter.

[2:26] GOD does not shy away from citing any kind of allegory,\* from the tiny mosquito and greater.

#### Etiquette

[33:53] O you who believe, do not enter the prophet's homes unless you are given permission to eat, nor shall you force such an invitation in any manner. If you are invited, you may enter. When you finish eating, you shall leave; do not engage him in lengthy conversations. This used to hurt the prophet, and he was too shy to tell you. But GOD does not shy away from the truth.

[2:146] Those who received the scripture recognize the truth herein, as they recognize their own children. Yet, some of them conceal the truth, knowingly.

[2:147] This is the truth from your Lord; do not harbor any doubt.