



A little boy was once playing in the garden when he noticed a cocoon hanging from the branch of a tree. As he watched, he was surprised to see a tiny hole appear in the wall of the cocoon. After some time, he noticed that there was something inside, struggling to make its way out. Slowly, with great effort and much struggling, it pushed at the hole, until part of its body had emerged. *At that point, the little boy realised, with great delight, that it was a butterfly!*

Eager to assist the struggling butterfly, he ran home, entered the kitchen, found a pair of scissors, and raced back to the cocoon, cutting at the hole until he had enlarged it sufficiently. Now that the hole was bigger, the butterfly emerged with ease, tumbling out of the cocoon onto a branch below. However, there was something wrong with the butterfly.

Its wings were shrivelled, while its body was engorged and swollen. The butterfly was unable to fly and remained where it was, weak and frail.

The next day, the little boy told his teacher what had happened and asked him why the butterfly couldn't fly. The teacher explained, *"For the butterfly to emerge from the cocoon, it has to undergo a great struggle and difficulty. However, it is this struggle and difficulty that makes its wings strong, enabling it to fly. If the butterfly does not face this challenge, it will never fly. This struggle is essential for the progress of the butterfly."*

The story of 'the boy and the butterfly' is often quoted, yet it remains as relevant as ever. Every one of us has our own challenges and obstacles which we face in our effort to reach Allah Ta'ala and become His special friends. Be it peer-pressure, family frustration or the lack of parental co-operation, the trials are various and affect people differently.

When most people contemplate their goals, they view the struggles that are necessary to achieve them and lose courage, thinking to themselves, *"I can never do this, it's impossible!"* However, facing these challenges are essential for our progress, as it is these struggles that strengthen us and give us the 'wings' to fly in our journey to Jannah.

It is commonly acknowledged that one of the most effective ways to gain motivation and inspiration is to consider other people who are just like us and faced the same challenges as us, yet overcame the seemingly insurmountable odds and achieved their goal.

The renowned saint, Junaid Baghdaadi (rahimahullah), once said, *"Incidents (that motivate one towards piety and righteousness) are an 'army' from the armies of Allah Ta'ala through which He strengthens the hearts of His selected servants."*
(Risaalatul Mustarshideen pg. 12)

In this regard, there are two types of inspirational stories; stories of women of the past (see last page of this newsletter) and stories of current-day women.

As far as inspirational incidents of current-day women are concerned, Uswatul Muslimah has launched an initiative named *'#Modern2Modest'* in which our respected mothers and sisters submit true stories of women who overcame their challenges to accept Islam itself, or to reform their lives, gaining the Divine happiness and proximity of Allah Ta'ala. Turn the page to read two such stories of women who are not merely our mothers and sisters, but are true inspirations to the women of the Ummah.

Do you have a personal story to share, or do you perhaps know of someone who has their own story to share? If so, submit the story to info@uswatulmuslimah.co.za

Please note that the identity of the submitters will NOT be published.