

The girl who refuses to hate her gender

I am a girl living in Afghanistan, having completed my bachelor's degree in a society where women are often silenced, objectified, and forced to live with limitations. I've spent countless moments reflecting on the struggles we face, and the pain of it all has broken me at times. In my culture, especially in Asian countries like mine, when a man touches a woman's body without consent, it's not seen as shameful for him. But when she protests, she's shamed. This injustice is a deep reflection of how little respect society has for a woman's dignity.

Growing up, girls are told their only purpose is to marry, have children, and care for the family, while boys are encouraged to dream—to become leaders, scientists, businessmen. Women's achievements are rarely celebrated. Where are the Afghan businesswomen, the scientists, the women who have succeeded on their own? Even globally, only a handful of women, like Marie Curie, have earned the Nobel Prize for their groundbreaking work. Why is that? Women have untapped potential, but society binds us with its limitations.

I remember a time, during the oppressive Taliban era, when I questioned my worth as a woman. I hated my gender. I asked myself: Why must we bear so much pain—from excruciating periods to the struggles of childbirth and raising children? Even after giving birth, a woman can be blamed if she doesn't produce a boy. The pain was overwhelming, and I started to lose faith. I wondered why there were no female messengers in religion and why men seemed to dominate history.

But then after joining education opportunity, I saw a new side of the world—a world full of kind, compassionate people. This shift in perspective changed my life. It made me realize that our worth isn't tied to our pain or the constraints society places on us. We are defined by our strength, our resilience, and our ability to rise from the challenges we face.

I began to think differently about God's wisdom. If I could understand everything He has done, if I could think like Him, what would be the difference between us? Would I not be like God if I understood His every choice? Women are not accidents or lesser beings. We are strong, powerful creations with a purpose, and it is this strength that will shape the future.

To all the women reading this: You are not alone. Your worth is immeasurable. No matter the struggles, your strength and courage define you. Know this—you are so much more than what society tries to make you believe. God created you strong, and it is in this strength that we find hope for a better world.