



# Bedër Youth

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MAGAZINE

## Down of Change

Our grandmothers taught us that we have one God, though we believe in Him differently.

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The Dignity and Importance of Women in Sacred Texts

The Future of Fashion is Sustainable

Reinventing Yourself

Awakening the mind: The Transformative Power of Knowledge



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Issue #6

# ***Beder Youth Magazine***

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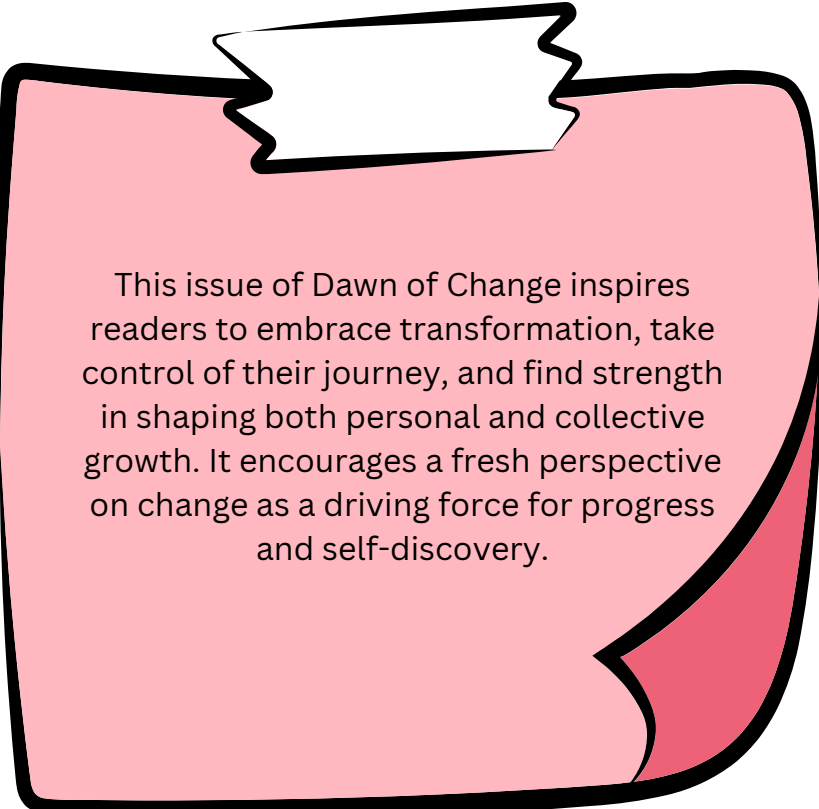
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This issue of Dawn of Change inspires readers to embrace transformation, take control of their journey, and find strength in shaping both personal and collective growth. It encourages a fresh perspective on change as a driving force for progress and self-discovery.

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# The Dignity and Importance of Women in Sacred Texts



Throughout human history, religious sources have played a crucial role in shaping societies and influencing moral values. One of the central themes found in these texts is the dignity and importance of women. Various religious traditions portray women as significant figures, embodying strength, wisdom, and compassion.

In Islam, the Quran emphasizes the equality of men and women in spiritual and moral responsibilities. Surah An-Nisa (4:1), a chapter specifically named after women, highlights the creation of men and women from a single soul, signifying their shared humanity. Additionally, Surah Luqman (31:14) acknowledges the physical and emotional sacrifices of mothers, emphasizing their central role in the family and society.

Islam commands respect and gratitude toward mothers, as also reinforced in the Hadith of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW). When a man asked him whom he should honor most between his parents, the Prophet replied, "Your mother" three times before mentioning the father. Furthermore, the Prophet stated, "Paradise lies under the feet of mothers," underscoring the high status and respect that mothers deserve. He also emphasized the importance of kindness toward women, stating, "The best of you are those who are best to their women." These teachings highlight the significance of respect, compassion, and justice in gender relations.

Christianity also upholds the dignity of women in both the Old and New Testaments. The Old Testament celebrates women such as Sarah, Rebekah, and Hannah for their faith and perseverance. Proverbs 31 presents women as strong, wise, and industrious, while Deborah, a prophetess and judge, exemplifies leadership and courage, reflecting the significant roles women play in society. Proverbs 14:1 state, "A wise woman builds her home, but a foolish woman tears it down with her own hands," illustrating the profound influence of women's actions and wisdom on their families and communities. Additionally, Exodus 20:12 commands children to honor both parents equally, reinforcing the respect and value of mothers. Proverbs 31:25 further describes women as strong, honorable, and confident about the future, demonstrating their resilience and leadership qualities.





Similarly, Judaism recognizes the dignity and importance of women through the Torah and other sacred writings. Proverbs 31 portrays the ideal woman as strong, wise, and hardworking. The concept of Eshet Chayil, or "woman of valor," celebrates women's contributions to their families and society, acknowledging their vital role in sustaining and nurturing communities.



In Hinduism, the divine nature of women is also acknowledged in sacred scriptures such as the Vedas and Upanishads. Goddesses like Saraswati (wisdom), Lakshmi (prosperity), and Durga (strength) are revered, each symbolizing different aspects of womanhood. The Rigveda (10:85:46) states, "May you be a queen to your father-in-law, a queen to your mother-in-law, and a queen to your husband," reflecting the honor and respect bestowed upon women within the household and society.

Despite cultural interpretations that sometimes limit women's roles, sacred texts consistently affirm their dignity and importance. Women are portrayed as nurturers, leaders, and spiritual guides, highlighting their indispensable contributions to both family and community life.

In conclusion, religious texts from various traditions emphasize the importance and dignity of women. By examining these sacred scriptures, people can learn to appreciate the significance of women and work toward greater gender equality and mutual respect.

*By Dauda Ibrahim Dachia*





# Shaban, A Month of Spiritual Rebirth

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A short analysis of the of the month of Shaban and  
its connection to renewal

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The month of Sha'ban is a time of profound spiritual reflection and renewal for Muslims around the world. It falls just before the holy month of Ramadan, and many consider it a crucial time to prepare spiritually for the fasts and prayers that come with Ramadan. Sha'ban serves as a period of spiritual preparation, giving Muslims the opportunity to purify their hearts, engage in voluntary acts of worship, and strengthen their relationship with Allah (SWT). By engaging in these practices, Muslims build the spiritual discipline necessary for the rigorous observance of Ramadan.

The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) emphasized the significance of fasting during Sha'ban. Although the fasts of Sha'ban are not obligatory, the Prophet was known to fast more in this month than in any other time, besides Ramadan. In a Hadith, of the Prophet Muhammed, "Sha'ban is a month that people neglect between Rajab and Ramadan." The emphasis here is on making the most of the opportunity for spiritual growth. One of the most significant nights during Sha'ban is Laylat al-Bara'ah, which falls on the 15th night of the month. It is a night of forgiveness and mercy, when Muslims believe that Allah (SWT) grants special mercy to those who ask for it. On this night, Allah is believed to forgive those who seek His forgiveness.



Sha'ban encourages Muslims to let go of past mistakes and renew their intentions and commitments to their faith. It is a time of spiritual rebirth, when individuals reflect on their relationship with Allah and take steps toward improving their lives. As a prelude to Ramadan, Sha'ban encourages self-reflection, repentance, and a return to the fundamental values of Islam: compassion, sincerity, and devotion to Allah.

Another important aspect of Sha'ban is the increased emphasis on charity and performing good deeds. Muslims are encouraged to engage in acts of kindness, charity, and community service, which help purify both wealth and soul, further preparing individuals for the heightened acts of worship in Ramadan.

The 15th of Sha'ban, or "Shab-e-Barat," is widely observed by some Muslim communities with special prayers and acts of devotion. Many Muslims believe that on this night, Allah (SWT) decrees the destiny of His creation for the coming year. It is seen as a night when people's deeds are reviewed, and those who seek forgiveness are granted a clean slate. Muslims often pray for guidance, mercy, and protection.

Sha'ban is a time of spiritual renewal, offering Muslims a chance to reflect, seek forgiveness, and spiritually prepare for the trials and blessings of Ramadan. The practices of fasting, charity, prayer, and self-reflection in Sha'ban are opportunities for a deeper connection to Allah and a chance to cleanse the heart and soul. It is a month that encourages the renewal of faith and self-improvement in anticipation of Ramadan, helping Muslims to strengthen their faith and deepen their devotion to their Creator.

*By Shukrie Iskurti*

# AN INTERVIEW WITH PROF. ASOC. DR. GENTI KRUIJA

**1. Although you are well known in Beder and beyond, it would be great if you provided some information for our readers on your academic journey.**

After completing high school in my hometown, Shkoder, I received a scholarship to study Sociology at Istanbul University, the oldest and largest university in Turkey, where the first rector was the Albanian scholar Hasan Tahsin. Upon returning to Albania, I pursued a Master of Arts in Sociology and Philosophy at the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Tirana. My thesis focused on "Challenges of Interreligious Understanding among Albanians: Progress and Challenges."

I then earned a PhD in Philosophy, with my dissertation titled "Gülen's Philosophy: A Practical Approach to Intercultural Dialogue." In 2022, I was awarded the title of Associate Professor by the University of Tirana. I have been serving as a lecturer at Beder University since 2013.



**2. Your academic journey has been deeply rooted in sociology, philosophy, and interfaith dialogue. How have these disciplines shaped your perspective on religious tolerance in Albania and beyond?**

My academic background in sociology, philosophy, and interfaith dialogue has shaped my perspective on religious tolerance in Albania and beyond by providing a comprehensive framework for understanding the unique historical and social fabric of interfaith coexistence. My Sociological profile has enabled me to analyze interfaith relations not just as a historical phenomenon, but as an ongoing social process that shapes identity, civic engagement, and national cohesion. Philosophical inquiry has deepened my appreciation for the ethical dimensions of interfaith dialogue, emphasizing that tolerance is not merely the absence of conflict but an active, engaged commitment to mutual understanding.

Albania's model of interreligious harmony -where religious diversity has historically been an asset rather than a source of division- demonstrates that tolerance is deeply embedded in cultural and social structures. My research has reinforced the understanding that Albanians have historically perceived religious differences not as obstacles but as opportunities for living together in peace. This unique aspect of Albanian society, where Muslims and Christians have lived together peacefully for centuries, is a valuable case study in global discussions on religious tolerance.

Furthermore, interfaith dialogue, both as a theoretical discipline and as a practical approach, has guided my efforts to promote mutual understanding and peaceful coexistence in broader international contexts. The Albanian experience offers a compelling counter-narrative to the often conflict-ridden histories of religious interaction elsewhere, proving that cultural and social factors play a crucial role in shaping religious coexistence.

### **3. What inspired you to get involved in interfaith religious studies, and can you share a moment when you saw the real impact of your work on religious understanding?**

I grew up in a city like Shkodra, where coexistence and interfaith harmony are defining characteristics. I was born during the brutal communist regime, a time when religion was outlawed. In school, my closest friends were Catholic, and we would secretly talk about our religious origins. Our grandmothers taught us that we have one God, though we believe in Him differently.

In 1990, a group of young Muslims and Catholics organized the first religious ceremonies -the Catholic Mass and the first Friday (Jumah) prayer-held on November 16, 1990. I was 13 years old and participated in this unforgettable event with my family. As children, our emotions were extraordinary. Although we were still living under communism, thousands of Muslims and Christians defied the most brutal regime in Europe at the time.

This experience sparked my deep interest in religion in general and Islam in particular. I experienced my first fasting and, later, the essence of forgiveness. After completing my Sociology studies in Istanbul and returning to Albania, I recognized the need for in-depth academic research in Interreligious Dialogue. It remains a crucial yet underexplored field in the Albanian academic landscape.

Motivated by this, I pursued postgraduate studies and later published two books based on my research: *Albanians Facing the Challenges of Interreligious Dialogue* and *History of Interreligious Dialogue*.

### **4. You have collaborated with many national and international organizations to promote the values of religion. What do you believe is the biggest challenge in fostering interfaith perception today?**

One of the biggest challenges in fostering interfaith perception today is overcoming deep-rooted prejudices and misconceptions about different religious traditions. While globalization has brought people of diverse faiths closer together, it has also amplified misunderstandings, fuelled by misinformation, political interests, and social tensions.

A common misconception also is that interfaith dialogue creates a new religion, whereas it actually promotes respect and coexistence while preserving distinct faith identities.

Another key issue is the instrumentalization of religion for political or ideological purposes, which often creates divisions rather than unity. In many societies, religious identity is used as a tool for exclusion, reinforcing stereotypes and fostering distrust rather than mutual understanding. Additionally, the rise of social media has contributed to both the spread of interfaith dialogue and, unfortunately, the rapid dissemination of hate speech and radical narratives.



To address these challenges, there is a strong need for education and grassroots engagement. Promoting interfaith literacy from a young age, encouraging open dialogue, and fostering personal interactions between people of different faiths can help break down barriers. Institutions, scholars, and religious leaders must work together to create spaces where respectful and meaningful exchanges can take place.

Education, dialogue, and grassroots engagement are key to building mutual understanding and harmony.

Only through these efforts can we build a future where interfaith perception is based on knowledge, respect, and shared human values.

**5. You have been editor in chief of ‘Zani i Naltë’ newspaper for almost a decade. What role do you think the media plays in promoting religious tolerance in today’s society? What would your advice for us, a group of young people trying to make a magazine work?**

Media plays a crucial role in promoting religious tolerance by shaping public perception, dispelling misconceptions, and providing a platform for diverse voices. It can either foster understanding and coexistence or contribute to division and polarization, depending on how religious topics are presented. Responsible journalism, fact-based reporting, and highlighting positive examples of interfaith cooperation are essential in countering stereotypes and promoting harmony.

For young people trying to make a magazine work, my advice is to prioritize credibility, engage with diverse perspectives, and remain committed to ethical journalism. Focus on storytelling that inspires and educates, rather than fuels division. Build a strong network of contributors, stay adaptable to new media trends, and ensure that your platform remains a space for constructive dialogue. Passion, consistency, and a clear vision will help you succeed in making an impact.

**6. As the newly elected President of the Religions for Peace Europe, what do you see as the main challenges and opportunities for interfaith dialogue in Europe today?**

As the newly elected President of Religions for Peace Europe, I see both significant challenges and opportunities for interfaith dialogue in Europe today.

One of the key challenges is the rise of populism, nationalism, and xenophobia, which often exploit religious differences to create division. Additionally, misinformation and the misuse of religion for political agendas can fuel misunderstandings and conflicts. Secularization in many European societies also poses a challenge, as religion is sometimes seen as irrelevant or even a source of tension rather than a force for peace. Furthermore, the refugee and migration crisis continues to test Europe's commitment to religious and cultural diversity, making interfaith dialogue even more necessary.

Despite these challenges, Europe presents unique opportunities for interfaith engagement. With its rich history of religious coexistence, Europe can serve as a model for constructive dialogue. The increasing presence of diverse religious communities provides a chance to foster deeper understanding and collaboration. Institutions such as the EU and OSCE, recognize the value of interfaith dialogue in promoting social cohesion, offering avenues for greater cooperation.

Religions for Peace Europe also through its key organs, plays a vital role in addressing these challenges and harnessing opportunities:

European National Interreligious Bodies (ENIB) strengthens collaboration between European-level interreligious councils, fostering grassroots and institutional cooperation.

European Council of Religious Leaders (ECRL) engages high-level religious leaders in dialogue and advocacy efforts to promote peace and reconciliation.

European Women of Faith Network (EWFN) empowers women from different religious backgrounds to contribute to peacebuilding and social justice.

European Interfaith Youth Network (EIYN) mobilizes young leaders to engage in interfaith dialogue, promoting tolerance and understanding among future generations.

To advance interfaith dialogue in Europe, we must continue strengthening interfaith education, promoting policies that encourage dialogue, and ensuring that religious communities actively contribute to peacebuilding efforts. By working together, and through the collective contributions of RfP Europe and its networks, we can turn diversity into a source of strength and foster a Europe where mutual respect and understanding prevail.

Albania's religious harmony is rooted in its history, culture, and social values. Centuries of coexistence between Muslims and Christians have fostered a strong sense of mutual respect and national unity. The absence of religious conflicts, even during times of political and social upheaval, reflects a deep-seated tradition of interfaith tolerance. Families often include members of different faiths, reinforcing a culture of acceptance. Additionally, the role of religious institutions and the Interreligious Council of Albania (IRCA) and Prizmi Dialogue Institute play a vital role in strengthening interfaith dialogue by uniting religious leaders, promoting cooperation, and addressing societal challenges together.

**7. Albania is known and promoted as a country characterized by religious harmony. What do you think makes this possible? How could this harmony be promoted even further?**

To further promote this harmony, education plays a key role. Integrating interfaith dialogue into school curricula, organizing community initiatives, and leveraging media to highlight positive examples can strengthen understanding. Internationally, Albania can serve as a model by sharing its experience in forums, academic research, and interfaith exchanges. Strengthening collaborations between religious leaders, civil society, and policymakers will ensure that Albania's religious harmony continues to thrive in an evolving global context.

**8. Sustainability and sustainable development is not just about the environment but also about creating social and cultural harmony and much more. Is interfaith collaboration working to meet the goals of sustainable development and how is it contributing to building more inclusive and resilient communities?**

Interfaith collaboration plays a crucial role in advancing the goals of sustainable development by fostering social cohesion, cultural harmony, and ethical responsibility. Beyond environmental sustainability, sustainable development also includes peace, justice, education, and reducing inequalities—areas where religious communities have long been active.

Through interfaith dialogue and cooperation, religious leaders and organizations promote inclusive and resilient communities by addressing social injustices, advocating for human rights, and supporting marginalized groups. Initiatives led by interfaith networks contribute to conflict resolution, disaster relief, and poverty reduction, creating more equitable and just societies. Additionally, faith-based organizations often lead environmental stewardship efforts, aligning with global sustainability goals.

By integrating religious values with the principles of sustainable development, interfaith collaboration strengthens community resilience, fosters solidarity across diverse groups, and promotes long-term peace and stability—key components of a truly sustainable future.



## 9. What role do you think young people play in promoting tolerance and understanding between different religions? What would you do to them?

Young people play a vital role in promoting tolerance and understanding between different religions. As future leaders, they bring fresh perspectives, openness to diversity, and the ability to challenge prejudices. Through education, dialogue, and social activism, they can bridge gaps, counter misinformation, and foster inclusive communities.

At the European level, the European Interfaith Youth Network (EIYN) within Religions for Peace Europe empowers young people to engage in interfaith dialogue, peacebuilding, and social action across the continent.

At the national level in Albania, the Youth Department of the Interreligious Council of Albania plays a crucial role in fostering interfaith engagement.

One other key initiative is the organization of interfaith symposiums between students of the Islamic Sciences Department at Bedër University, the Department of (Orthodox) Theology and Culture at Logos University, and the Catholic Theological Institute. These exchanges encourage young scholars from different religious backgrounds to engage in meaningful discussions, deepen their understanding of one another's traditions, and build strong interfaith relationships.

My message to young people is: Be active, be curious, and be engaged. Learn about different faiths, participate in interfaith initiatives, and use your platforms—whether in schools, communities, or social media—to promote respect and coexistence. Interfaith dialogue is not about changing beliefs but about understanding and appreciating differences. By working together, young people can build a future where diversity is not a source of division, but of strength and unity.

## 10. How would inter-religious harmony and tolerance contribute to Albania's development in the short and long run? Could you elaborate on this also from the perspective of an academician and university professor?

Interreligious harmony is one important pillar for Albania's development, because society built on mutual respect and peaceful coexistence fosters stability, social cohesion, and inclusive growth. In the short run, religious harmony helps prevent conflicts, strengthen national identity, and attract international partnerships, as Albania is recognized as a model of interfaith coexistence. This, in turn, boosts tourism, investment, and cultural diplomacy. In the long run, interreligious harmony contributes to sustainable development, ensuring that education, governance, and social policies remain inclusive. A society that values diversity is more resilient to extremism, political manipulation, and social fragmentation. Religious communities working together can also drive positive change in areas such as poverty reduction, environmental sustainability, and humanitarian efforts.

From an academic perspective, interfaith dialogue should be an integral part of education and research. As a university professor, I emphasize the importance of critical thinking, intercultural competence, and historical awareness in shaping future generations. Universities must serve as platforms for interdisciplinary research on religion and society, increasing collaborations among departments of Islamic, Orthodox, and Catholic studies. Through academic exchanges, interfaith symposiums, and student engagement, we can ensure that Albania's tradition of religious harmony is not only preserved but also studied, developed, and promoted as a model for global peacebuilding and social progress.

**11. As we are approaching the end of this interview, I would like to ask about your hobbies and the activities that you enjoy the most. You know, there is a common belief among students that successful academicians don't know how to have fun.**

I think that's a common misconception! As a modest lecturer, I believe that academicians, like anyone else, need balance in their lives to stay creative, energized, and focused. Personally, I enjoy spending time with family and friends, which helps me stay grounded. I also love old pictures and documents and collecting them. I lead a project to digitalize a half million documents of the Muslim Community of Albania in the State Archive, and I worked in three albums with old pictures from different cities in Albania, in collaboration with some universities, the Ministry of Culture, the Marubi Museum and the State Archive.

In addition, I find a lot of joy in traveling, as it gives me the chance to experience different cultures and learn from them. Until now, I have visited 40 countries, where mostly I participated in different conferences and activities on interfaith dialogue, but some of them just as a visitor. I also enjoy engaging in outdoor activities like hiking or cycling, which help me clear my mind and stay physically active. Balancing work with hobbies allows me to be more productive and present in both my professional and personal life.



**Interviewers:**

Sara Pashollari

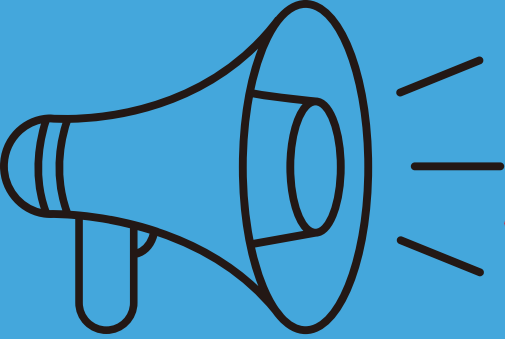
Dauda Ibrahim Dachia

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**m**AGAZINE

**Thank you for your time and for being so open and direct in your responses!**



# BREAKING NEWS



## NE SHQIPERI... EDHE PER STUDIME

I RIU NGA NIGERIA: PASI TE MBAROJ SHKOLLEN DUA TE JETOJ KETU

SHQIPERIA SOT



## VOICES FROM ABROAD

From our dear student and Editor in Chief of the Beder Youth Magazine, Daud Ibrahim Dachia



DAUD IBRAHIM DACHIA - STUDENT NE TIRANE

## NE SHQIPERI... EDHE PER STUDIME

I RIU NGA NIGERIA: PASI TE MBAROJ SHKOLLEN DUA TE JETOJ KETU

Informohu ne kohe reale: abcnews.al



## NE SHQIPERI... EDHE PER STUDIME

I RIU NGA NIGERIA: PASI TE MBAROJ SHKOLLEN DUA TE JETOJ KETU

SHQIPERIA SOT



"It felt good to express how I found myself here in this country and also about the people. How I felt about them and their customs."



## NE SHQIPERI... EDHE PER STUDIME

I RIU NGA NIGERIA: PASI TE MBAROJ SHKOLLEN DUA TE JETOJ KETU

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## THE FUTURE OF FASHION



## IS SUSTAINABLE

The production of clothes is one of the most polluting industries. According to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP, 2019), the fashion industry is responsible for about 10% of global carbon emissions and 20% of global wastewater. The production of textiles requires a vast amount of water – close to what a person consumes in two years! Furthermore, producing synthetic and polyester material will require the release of microplastics in the water, further polluting the environment.

Fast fashion is made by using relatively cheap garments and using quick and toxic methods to produce clothes, therefore contributing significantly to environmental damage. Consumers may purchase something from fast fashion company providers, such as Shein or Temu, wear it a few times then discharge it in their trash, leading to the exact issue we're discussing. According to the Ellen MacArthur Foundation (2017), one garbage of clothes is collected every second around the world, and this requires the need for a shift in consumer behavior.

With the growth of consumers, a few months ago there was a trend in TikTok with the tagline “#overconsumerism”, which included photos and videos of users posting about “cleaning” their wardrobes filled with a lot of clothes produced by these companies, that they had probably worn once for an event and never worn it again; or some users posting about their several “new clothes hauls”, under the influence of a trend, but the item will probably stay in their wardrobe untouched for ages, before being thrown away.

The writers of this article were victim of this too. During the winter of 2023, there was the trend of “Slavic aesthetic”, so one of them thrifted a hideous leather bag just for the sake of the trend. She wore it once and can never throw a glance at it again. Only this is enough to understand that the fast fashion industry is growing by the demand of the consumers, and they are the ones who want to fit into every trend. Everyone wants a new “coquette top with a pink ribbon”, or a “vampy lace dress”, or “uggs suede shoes”, but they are neglecting the harm that it is causing to the environment.

Sustainable fashion is not only about using pre-used clothes and reducing the constant unnecessary purchases, but it is also about practices that promote ethical garment production. This could be done by starting off using eco-friendly materials, such as organic cotton, bamboo, hemp, and recycled fabrics. It is also important to ensure ethical labor practices, by ensuring fair wages and safe work conditions; something that is missing within the fast fashion companies. It is proven that various “trendy and affordable” corporates demand a huge staff to create their numerous products, which often means the relying upon child labor, in order to reach their trademark. Slow fashion emphasizes quality over quantity, and promotes less purchasing but longer-lasting clothes.

Many renewed and influential figures have reshaped the game of sustainable fashion. For example, “Patagonia” is a sport retail brand which relies on ethical labor and the use of sustainable materials. Stella McCartney has introduced the trend of sustainable garments in luxury clothing too, by using vegan leather. The good thing is that even some well-known fast fashion brands are changing, like H&M. They are using recycled textiles by introducing “go green” lines. These healthy materials are also being used in lingerie brands, as it is mandatory for the comfort and safety of people, primarily women and children. A German lingerie brand called “Body Essentials” is using bamboo cotton to produce their undergarments; which also benefits as a good marketing strategy. When the consumers know that the undergarments are made with healthy materials, they will not hesitate to purchase them. People do not compromise on their underclothing.

The sustainable fashion phenomenon in Albania is developing fast, as well. Several local designers and distinguished brands are taking a turn of more eco-friendly practices. A recently-founded brand called “Maet” produces clothes by using organic linen, certified silk and regenerated wool. However, most people are not aware of this brand’s existence and would prefer to shop at some famous international brands, as their name echoes everywhere.

The future of fashion is heading onto sustainability, as the brands, workers, consumers and the environment demands it. While there are still hassles to transcend, the work conditions are getting better, the materials are constantly being rechecked, and the fashion practices are improving, which leads to the conclusion that a more responsible fashion industry is possible. In Albania, the shift is gradual, but still ongoing. By embracing sustainable fashion choices, and rejecting extreme fast fashion options like Shein and Temu. individuals can contribute to a more ethical, environmentally friendly future, ensuring that style and sustainability can coexist.

Many Albanians also engage into “thrifting”, which is an activity of buying old and used clothes, with a relatively cheaper price in comparison to the ones in a store. One can find everything there... I mean it. One of the authors, once, found a wedding gown in a small shop in the neighborhood of Allias, Tirana! While it is a good thing that many people are shopping at thrift shops, most of them do not spread the word or advertise it, as they are “ashamed” of being tagged as “poor”. But thrifting is not only related with financial awareness; it is more about respecting the environment and the consumers who are suffering by fast fashion. Not just thrift stands in “5 Maji street”, but also stores like Berlintexx are known to have good quality clothes, if you search well of course! This thrifting process can be done online too, with new platforms like “Doll App”, where you can sell your old clothes and purchase someone else’s; an innovative app established by Aneida Bajraktari Bicja.



*By Sara Pashollari and Enda Vrap*

# Cultural Appropriation in Music:



Borrowing or  
Exploiting?

Cultural appropriation is when someone takes ideas, styles, or traditions from another culture without understanding, respecting, or having permission to use them. It goes beyond simply borrowing elements from another culture; it involves taking something that holds deep significance, history, or meaning.

Cultural appropriation in music is when artists use sounds, styles, or clothing from another culture without understanding or respecting where they come from. Musicians take traditional music, instruments, or fashion from a culture and use them just to look cool or make money, without thinking about their original meaning. Incorporating music from different cultures can be a wonderful way to embrace and honor diversity. Many musicians mix various musical genres to produce innovative sounds. However, it becomes an issue when this borrowing is done without respect or comprehension of the culture it originates from.

In October 2020, Rihanna faced criticism for using a song that included a recitation from a hadith during her Savage X Fenty fashion show. The social media users reacted harshly when she featured the song "Doom," produced by CouCou Chloe, in her fashion show. The song included words from a Hadith by Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) about the signs of the Day of Judgment. A hadith is a collection of sayings, actions, or approvals of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and his companions, serving as an important source of Islamic guidance alongside the Quran, providing insights into the Prophet's way of life, beliefs, and teachings.

The show involved models dancing, what upset Muslims, because it disrespected Islam, treating it like something for entertainment or business, instead of the respect they deserve. After receiving backlash, she expressed regret and clarified that the use of the religious content was not intentional and was not meant to disrespect anyone's beliefs. However, some of the critics think she might have done it to get more publicity, even if it was disrespectful.

Incorporating elements from different cultures into music not only celebrates diversity but also fosters a deeper understanding of various traditions. Musical collaborations serve as a form of cultural exchange, and artists share and celebrate their cultural heritage. This exchange not only enriches the global music scene but also educates the audience about the histories and stories behind various musical traditions. For instance, Shakira's collaboration with the South African band "Freshlyground" on the song "Waka Waka" introduced the rich musical traditions of South Africa. The blend of Shakira's Colombian pop style with "Freshlyground"'s African rhythms created a unique sound that was loved by millions of people around the world. "Waka Waka" was not just a popular song, but a way for people to connect with each other through music, helping people appreciate the beauty of different cultures and showing how music can bring the world together.

In the music industry, it is important to distinguish between borrowing and stealing. Borrowing is acceptable when artists show respect, honor and understand the culture they are inspired by. When artists borrow from a culture, they should give credit to the original artists and ensure that they are fairly compensated. This is seen in collaborations like Drake working with Afrobeats artist Wizkid on "One Dance," where both artists brought their unique cultural styles together and acknowledged each other's contributions. On the other hand, stealing happens when a culture is used for profit. In 2016, Beyoncé faced criticism for her portrayal in Coldplay's "Hymn for the Weekend" music video, wearing traditional Indian garments and symbols. Most of the people felt that Beyoncé turned them into simple fashion accessories, without understanding their real meaning. Some people felt a stereotype, critics saying that using these important cultural symbols just for a music video was disrespectful, it seemed like they were being used for fun. For this reason, artists must strive to be mindful of the cultures they engage with, ensuring their work reflects respect and appreciation for the diverse influences that shape the global music scene.

In conclusion, cultural appropriation in music is a complex issue that requires artists to be aware of the cultural significance behind the elements they use. While borrowing from different cultures can be a beautiful way to celebrate diversity and create new sounds, it is important to approach it with respect and understanding. The key to making cultural exchange positive lies in giving credit to the original creators, ensuring they are fairly compensated, and avoiding the exploitation of cultural symbols for personal gain. By doing so, artists can create music that both honors and celebrates the rich traditions of different cultures, contributing to a more inclusive and respectful global music community.



*By Adelina Kamo*



# REINVENTING YOURSELF

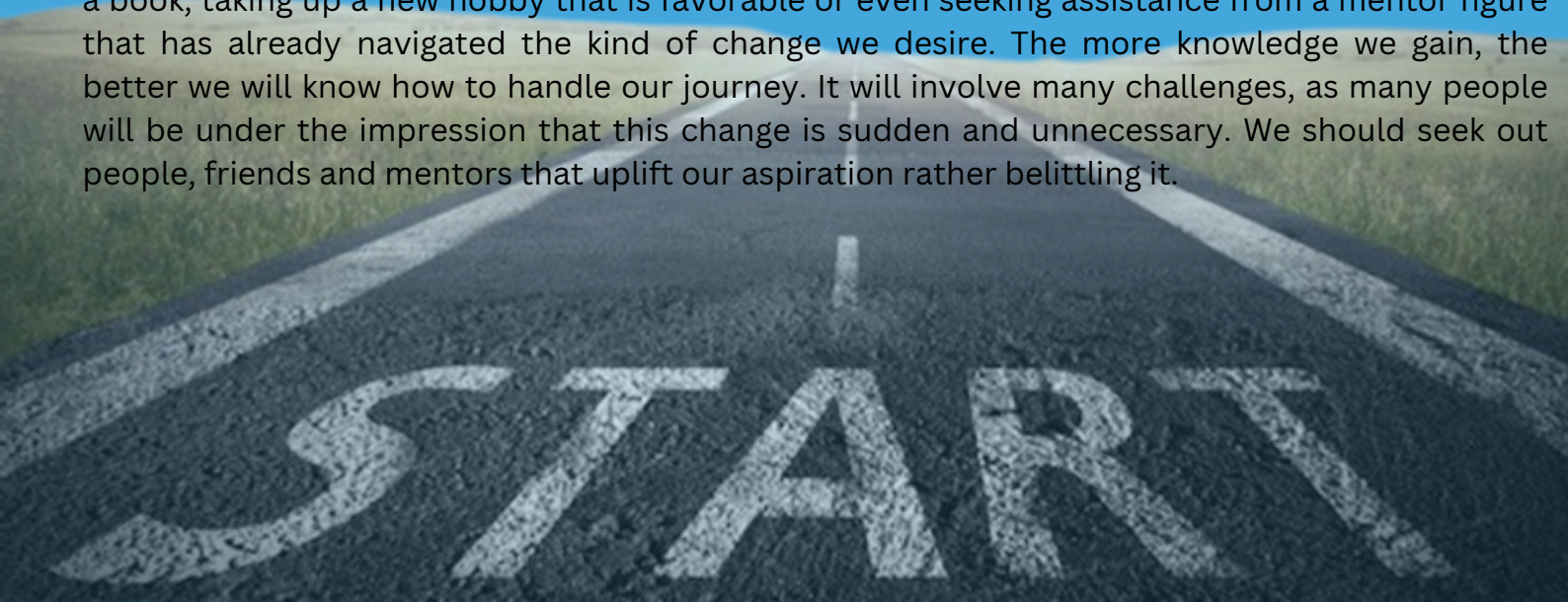


A guide on embracing change, whether academically, socially, or personally

Life is a constant cycle of change, with some endings and new beginnings. It can be changing switching schools, finding new friends, or even rethinking your academic path – change is always a constant reminder of evolution. But what if instead of fearing it, we learned to embrace it? Reinventing yourself is an art form – a way to find new opportunities and rejuvenate into the person you want to become.

Staying where you are might feel comfortable, but making that one step forward will establish growth. Whether you are meeting with unwanted results, broken friendships or a family hassle; remind yourself that every hardship challenges you to improve. Accepting the need for change is the first asset that helps. What kind of people we aspire to become? Reinventing yourself does not necessarily mean to delete your past, but it is more about refining our identity. We can achieve that by setting new academic goals, seeking new work or social opportunities and find personal hobbies that help keep us fulfilled. Visualizing our dream life always manifests our goals, - so keeping a journal and creating a visual board help us picturize what we aim and eventually, we know what to expect.

In this reinvention process we should master the skill of learning, - as we will learn about ourselves, the life decisions and the way to handle challenges. The swift change however, is impossible, and it takes time to pull through immediately. The wellness journey takes time, and it requires determined discipline to see the desired results. This journey might be about a physical change, a mental change, spiritual or societal oriented change. We can start by reading a book, taking up a new hobby that is favorable or even seeking assistance from a mentor figure that has already navigated the kind of change we desire. The more knowledge we gain, the better we will know how to handle our journey. It will involve many challenges, as many people will be under the impression that this change is sudden and unnecessary. We should seek out people, friends and mentors that uplift our aspiration rather belittling it.



# The Old

Beyond personal growth, this reinvention can serve a greater purpose. When we evolve, we make sure to issue our new perspective to fields and situations around us. By changing, we are also open to innovation, - with opportunities to apply them in our studies, communities or global affairs. Improving oneself is only one aspect of reinvention; another is transforming the environments we live in and encouraging others to do the same. A dedication to change can result in advances problem-solving ways, creativity, and leadership which have a long-lasting effect that extends well beyond ourselves.

Moreover, such kind of reinvention does not have to be a solitary movement. We have experienced communities that are built through shared undertaking. These individuals require the support of networks, whether in education, professional life, or activism; which can help them achieve success with confidence. All these communities find reinvention to be a more rewarding and significant journey when they share challenges, learn from others' experiences, and celebrate successes together.

The skill of reinvention has been skillfully mastered by women in general. They have had to constantly adapt to the changing perceptions of them in a society; or sometimes being themselves the change. Women have always expressed flexibility, and their character in history has not remained stagnant; from individuals with no right to vote to contemporary businesswomen shattering stereotypes in fields dominated by men. Their experiences are potent reminders that overcoming adversity is not the only goal of reinvention; it is about thriving.

Lastly, reinvention is a constantly occurring process, that requires courage and strength to meet the unknown. We open doors for ourselves and everyone around us when we consistently work towards improvement. The power of reinvention is in our capacity to mold our own stories and forge new avenues for advancement, whether on a personal level or as a component of a broader movement.

# ME

*By Sara Pashollari*



# AI AND THE FUTURE OF CREATIVITY- EXPLORING HOW ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IS RESHAPING ART, WRITING, AND MEDIA

Imagine a world where paintings are created by algorithms, stories are written by machines, and music is composed by code. This world is strikingly familiar. It resembles the science fiction movies where people are half-machine, half-human. Things are calculated by algorithm and people are living based on artificial intelligence.

This isn't science fiction- this is reality and that world is under construction at this very moment. Artificial intelligence (AI) has transformed into a powerful tool that is changing and influencing art, writing and media. Just by clicking a button this mischievous companion of ours can paint masterpieces, craft compelling stories and even produce hit songs. AI is always evolving and improving its skills presenting challenges about human creativity and how technology will shape our culture. It has experienced a profound improvement in creative fields mostly due to advancements in machine learning, deep learning and neural networks. These developments make it possible for AI to access and understand a vast number of datasets from art, music, literature and other creative forms, including media.

AI dominance has also impacted music production presenting to producers or songwriter tools like OpenAI's MuseNet and Google's Magenta. Both these tools are able to produce music across many genres. They learn from different patterns of songs and make use of these patterns to create new compositions. Nothing is impossible if given as a task to these tools because they are able to generate rhythm, melodies and even different harmonies that sound so magical to the ear of the audience giving the feeling that the songs were created by the human hand. Musicians benefit from these AI tools because they can provide a primary source of inspiration such as a base melody, harmony or rhythm that later on they could improve and work on. This makes them suffer less and produce more easily without going through multiple waves of stress to create something valuable for the audience to engage themselves with.

Additionally, AI doesn't just replicate existing works - it has the ability to generate and innovate new content, shocking even the experienced creators. For instance, DALL-E, MidJourney and Stable Diffusion can create images from just a mere text prompt. These AI tools don't just copy old art forms and styles but they combine them all together creating new varieties. Many new artists can start by generating AI images to get a general idea and style and then improve it so it appears as new and original. Even the old artists can depend on this technique because all are aware of how difficult it is to get inspired or have a muse to work from.

We are not professional writers writing about great things and developing amazing plots but deep down all us are writers. Some write because it is a passion, some to pass the time and some write to get something out of their chest. We all brainstorm and sometimes feel stuck on what to write dealing with the author's block. It is a terrible feeling like we are abandoned in the middle of the desert, the words that we need to write feel far away and not reachable.

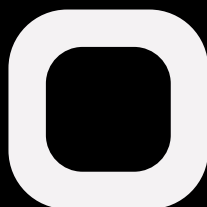
The creativity is slipping from the hands and the mind is restless because it can't come up with a solution. Like a knight in shining armor, AI tools appear to rescue the needy. These tools suggest story ideas, write a dialogue and even help on finishing a story. For instance, ChatGPT is a smart choice for brainstorming a new plot or developing a character. It just needs for the writer to give the right command of what he needs and is expecting the tool to do so he can have the solution to his problem and finally the water seems closer than before. AI can go beyond simple writing tasks; it could even combine together different genres for example science fiction with historical fiction and create a new type of stories.

AI growth is amazing, even majestic but after all that majesty isn't there to be scared of? Isn't there something that humans should take into consideration regarding this powerful ally of the human beings? Artificial intelligence has raised questions and challenges about copyright, data privacy and fake information because this powerful machine is trained to use a large amount of information that often does not have the permission of the original creator raising questions about who is the real owner of the work. A deep concern these days is the AI generated content that is becoming and sounding more realistic.

These deep fake videos and AI-written news articles are making it harder to differentiate what is real and what is fake. People are becoming part of a never ending and deep dilemma in today's society because they don't know what to believe and don't even know how to separate a content written from AI tools and a content that is written from human hand. This is also happening with pictures or videos that are generated from these tools fooling humans into thinking these are real and getting an amount of likes and subscriptions because today people live for the likes and views.

As we move into the future, we must strike a balance between innovation and responsibility, being confident that AI helps humans without harming their creativity and leaving them behind in shadows that they can't survive. AI is our unpredictable ally that grows hand in hand with the artist helping, working with him and not against him. Just like cameras changed visual arts without getting rid of the painting, AI will serve as a bridge for new possibilities in creative expression.

*By Armanda Çela*



## Turning Failure into Fuel – Stories of Famous People Who Used Their Failures as Stepping Stones to Success

Throughout history, certain women have dared to challenge the norms, break boundaries, and inspire future generations. They fought for their voices to be heard in societies that often silenced them. Aphra Behn, Mary Wollstonecraft, Sojourner Truth, Malala Yousafzai, and St. Teresa of Ávila, each with their own unique struggles, showed the world what it meant to stand up for what is right, even when it seemed impossible. These women not only fought for themselves but for countless others, leaving legacies that continue to live even nowadays.

Aphra Behn spent her life working for literature and for the empowerment of women's voices. Today, she is remembered as one of the first women in history to make a living through writing. However, her journey was not easy. Not much is known about her early years, yet, it is a fact she grew up in a world where women had little freedom. As a young woman, she was sent on a dangerous mission as a spy for King Charles II during a war between England and the Netherlands. But instead of being rewarded for her service, she was betrayed. The king never paid her, and she was left in debt. Unable to pay her bills, she was thrown into prison. When she was released, she had only one way to survive, which was writing. At that time, writing was considered a man's job. Women who wrote were called immoral. But Aphra did not care.

She wrote plays, poems, and novels which focused on love, politics, power, and injustice. One of her most famous works, *Oroonoko*, told the tragic story of an enslaved African prince. It was one of the first English novels to criticize slavery. Aphra was ahead of her time, speaking about issues that most people ignored. Because she was a woman and a writer, she faced constant attacks. Men accused her of being shameless, and indecent. They said women should not write, should not talk about love and power, and should not have opinions. But Aphra continued. As the years went by, poverty and illness made her life harder. She suffered from pain, struggled to pay her bills, and lived in difficult conditions. But she never stopped writing. She wrote until the very end, because she knew that her work was bigger than herself. She died exhausted and poor. But, because of her, other women dared to write. Because of her, literature was no longer just for men. And from her sacrifice, many new voices have risen, voices that continue to grow, like flowers in the soil she left behind.



In a similar struggle for women's rights and education, Mary Wollstonecraft fought for women's rights at a time when the world did not want to listen. Her childhood was not happy. Her father was abusive and often drank too much. Mary saw her mother suffer under his control, and this shaped her view of the world. She understood from an early age that women had little power in society, and she refused to accept that fate for herself. Unlike most girls of her time, Mary wanted an education. But schools were mostly for boys, and her family had no money to support her studies.



At that time, people thought women were naturally weak, emotional, and unfit for serious thinking. Mary disagreed. She believed that women appeared weak only because they were denied education. If given the same opportunities as men, women could be just as intelligent, strong, and independent. In 1792, she wrote *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, one of the first books ever written about women's equality. In it, she argued that women were not inferior to men, but society kept them ignorant by refusing them education. She wanted for girls to be allowed to go to school, to learn science, philosophy, and politics, subjects that were considered only for men. This was a shocking idea at the time. People mocked her and called her "unnatural,". But she did not stop. She kept writing for change. She became one of the first women in history to openly challenge the idea that men should always be in charge. Mary was a woman far ahead of her time, and because of that, she suffered. She had no financial security, no stable home, and no respect from the society she was trying to change. She struggled to make a living from her writing and often found herself alone. Although she did not live to witness the world transform, it is certain that she planted the seeds of revolution.




Sojourner Truth was born into slavery in New York, when it was still legal in the North. Her family was torn apart as her siblings were sold away. At nine, she was sold to a man who beat her daily. Passed from one owner to another, she endured beatings, hunger, and humiliation but never lost her sense of worth. As she grew older, she was forced into marriage and had children. When one of her sons was illegally sold to an owner in Alabama, she refused to accept this injustice. She took the case to court and, against all odds, won, becoming one of the first Black women in America to successfully challenge a white man. But she knew that one victory was not enough. In 1826, she escaped with her baby daughter, and found refuge in a kind family who helped her buy her freedom. Later on, she changed her name to Sojourner Truth, as she believed God had called her to travel and speak the truth. Though she never learned to read or write, her powerful voice exposed the horrors of slavery in the best way possible. She began traveling from city to city, speaking about the evils of slavery and the need for justice. Her speeches were unlike anything people had heard before. She shared stories of enslaved people, describing their suffering, their struggles, and their hopes. Some people laughed at her. Some insulted her. Others threatened her life. But she never stopped. She also became a leader in the women's rights movement. In 1851, she gave her famous Ain't I a Woman? speech, challenging the idea that women were weak. Even after slavery was abolished, she kept fighting. She helped freed Black people find homes and jobs, fought for land rights, and spoke out against racism and injustice. She remained a fearless advocate until her death in 1883. Her courage and words continue to inspire generations.



Some people stay silent out of fear. Others, even in the face of death, refuse to be silenced. Malala Yousafzai is one of those people. From a young age, she fought for something many take for granted, which is education. She risked everything, even her life, to defend the right of girls to learn. Born in Mingora, Pakistan, Malala was raised in a home that valued education. Her father was a teacher and encouraged her to dream beyond traditional gender roles. But when the Taliban took control of the Swat Valley, girls were banned from school. Schools were bombed, teachers were killed, and fear spread.

Many families kept their daughters at home, but Malala refused to accept this reality. At just 11 years old, she began writing an anonymous blog for the BBC under the name Gul Makai, describing life under the Taliban. She shared her fears of losing her education and her dreams of becoming a doctor. Her words reached thousands, shedding light on the oppression of girls in Pakistan. As she became more famous, appearing in interviews and documentaries, she became a target. One day, while returning home from school, Taliban gunmen stopped her bus, called her by name, and shot her in the head. Two other girls were also injured. Malala was rushed to a hospital in Pakistan and later transferred to the UK for treatment. In critical condition, she underwent multiple surgeries but made a miraculous recovery. Most people would have been too afraid to continue speaking out. But Malala was not like most people. Instead of hiding, she spoke at the United Nations, declaring: "One child, one teacher, one book, and one pen can change the world." Her words inspired millions. She met world leaders, urging them to invest in girls' education. Not only, she also co-founded the Malala Fund, helping provide education to girls in countries where it is denied. Though she now lives in the UK, her heart remains in Pakistan. She still continues to fight for girls that are denied an education. Malala could have chosen a quiet life after surviving her attack. She could have given up. But she didn't. She knew her story was bigger than herself, it was about millions of girls with dreams but no opportunity.



And throughout all of these women's journeys, St. Teresa of Ávila's life was also one of struggle and deep faith. She was born in Spain and joined a convent when she was young, but it wasn't what she expected. Instead of finding peace and connection with God, she saw many nuns living without much care for their faith. At the time, many nuns were in convents because of family pressure, tradition, or simply the expectation of fulfilling a religious role, rather than out of spiritual desire. Teresa believed that many of them lacked a true inner faith or understanding of what it meant to live a deeply spiritual life. This troubled her, and she wanted something different, a life that focused on prayer and closeness to God. Her journey wasn't easy. Teresa wanted convents that focused on prayer, silence, and simplicity, but not everyone agreed with her ideas. Many people criticized her for being too bold. But she didn't give up. She started 17 new convents, all focused on a simple life of prayer and faith. Life was hard in these convents, they had little money, and the conditions were tough, but Teresa believed it was worth it. She wanted the women who joined her to have the chance to grow spiritually, just as she had. She wrote books, like *The Interior Castle*, to share her ideas and inspire others to find a deeper connection with God. Her writing was powerful and helped many people, especially women, feel they could have a close relationship with God too.

The stories of these women are more than just tales of struggle; they are a testament to the power of courage and the pursuit of justice. They proved that no matter the challenges, a single voice, when combined with determination and a belief in change, can change the course of history. Their legacies continue to inspire and challenge us to stand up, speak out, and ensure that every voice, no matter how small, has a chance to be heard.



*By Isra Huti*



# ***The last winter***

Once in a lifetime, I used to live in winter. A cold winter that did not last three months. 365 days of winter. Repeatedly for years. A black winter, which I got used to it, unfortunately. I got used to big grey clouds, rain, wind, thunderstorms, frost, no birds, no sun, and no flowers. I never had to experience summer, to lay by the beach, enjoy sun, and hear the birds and the happy voices of kids. The fortune of winter would come every evening in my house and destroy everything, which my kids and me would try to fix the next morning.

Winter would come from work and bring cold, strong winds with himself. The screaming winds made my kids sit in a corner and cover their ears. That wind would smash the plates of food, the glasses, the wall and sometimes me. There was never a light, cosy wind. Winter was never good; he would always leave space for rain. I was raining; my kids were raining even more. At first I loved winter, because, at times, he would leave some space for spring. I would give everything to make spring come again, but the flowers were dead since I got pregnant. Maybe winter was right, I was getting uglier, my body was getting shapes I never wanted and I did not have time to take care of myself. I tried sometime to bring spring back but it was impossible.

I have two kids who love or hate winter. He acts as if he loves them but he never did. They would go to him and try to hug him. He would do the same thing but not even with a flower. I never remember winter bringing any candy to them, taking them out to the park or saying that MAGICAL word, "I love you". I felt guilty for seeing my kids live in winter the whole time. I pray for them every night, I pray for my son not to become another winter and for my daughter not to be stuck in one, as I did. He never went to school for them, not even once did he ask how they were doing. I thought I could bring spring back when we would become a real family, but those were just my imaginatively thoughts.

The thunderstorms were strong. There were always combined with wind, rain and dark clouds. Those thunderstorms would tighten by my throat until the last second before heaven. Sometimes they would kick me on my head as much as they could. Once I remember seeing a big amount of my hair on winter's hands after he pulled them with all his forces. Then, he would still use his thunderstorms to kick my back and my belly. I perfectly remember being on bed for days because of the thunderstorms, not being able to move because of pain. My kids were hungry, and I had no power to cook them food. I had to see them grow up, not live their childhood because of Winter. The thunderstorms were pure, clean leaving no doubt, if there is any small piece of love left in his eyes. The red marks on my body wouldn't leave for days but it was okay because I wasn't going out anywhere. I still tried to bring some spring in my home.

The best days were the ones where it was just cold, no rain, winds or thunderstorms. He would come from work, eat dinner, sit on the couch and say nothing. These nights were cold, but they were the best. He would stay on his phone; the whole evening, sometimes smiling a little. Yes, I know, I even knew back then. As long as he was just cold, I was okay with this. Physically I was but my heart would scream what my mouth could not. I had to shut my mouth up, be okay with everything he would do or say, because I had no place to go, no kids to raise on streets and no days to live in summer. Winter was someone else's summer, while I was just trying to have a day of spring.

Since I remember, I was raised with the idea that only marriage can complete a woman, that I could do nothing with my life if I did not have a husband or kids. Those were a woman's duty; clean, cook, take care of the husband, not make him mad, wash his clothes, not ask any questions that would make thunderstorms appear and - what is more important - have kids! Every mother loves their kids; I absolutely do, but I am more than regretful that I had them in winter. I feel sorry for my kids to have a father like him, to cause them trauma and not to teach them love. Still, my mother says that this is my duty: teach my kids what love is and that the reason I am violated almost every day was me. It was my fault my winter did not love me, I should have been more attractive for him; I should have taken better care of him and be the woman he wanted; because this was my job, to be my husband's wife.

I never knew the power I had. If I hadn't fought for my own self, no one would have told me who I could become. No one came and told me that I did not need a husband to bring spring. This made me understand that winter, unfortunately, was not just my husband, but also that everyone around me was part of it. If someone would have come and told me back then that I could open my own business, I would divorce him, my kids would be way happier and that I would live in summer most of the year, I would just sit, imagine this kind of life and do nothing for it.

If I do not work for myself, no one will; no one care for my life more than I do. It's harder to sit on a couch and do nothing than waking the brain up and fight for oneself. No one can bring back the time and choose a different father for my children or choose the family I want to be born in but one can be born again by herself, supporting her own thoughts.

**A woman is not born to be a slave, but her own summer!**

***Dedicated to every woman that is stuck in a violating marriage, for every woman that is shown their limits, for every female that is stuck in abuse and forced to live their life, as they do not desire. Be your own idol in life!***

*By Fabiola Markola*

## **“Awakening the Mind: The Transformative Power of Knowledge”**

*By Klea Pjetri*

Knowledge is a powerful force that can be both beneficial and harmful. It is a valuable asset for the wise and an obsession for those who continuously seek it. It influences individuals across all roles in society, including leaders and rebels. Its pursuit is continuous, always driving the need for more. It was what initially made the first human beings to ever exist, fall from grace. And nowadays, there are billions of Adams and Eves; we are them as soon as the good and the bad are revealed to us. It is what sent Prometheus to the eternal, inescapable torture. Wanting to shed “light” for the sake of the love for human beings - which could be compared to the contemporary Elon Musk phenomenon. But me? I wonder what could come out of me if I just let myself loose towards a legacy built through years and centuries of life.

If I could ask for just a bit more knowledge, the first sip of it would put me in seventh heaven. Fine like an old wine, bitter like wormwood, could I truly resist such a complexity? A prophet I would surely be, for the secrets of the world would be served to me in a golden plate, no matter whether they were appealing to the eye or biting like snakes and scorpions. And I could become one of those obedient servants and executors of God's word, calling people to get rid of their sins and saving them from the second and final death. Too much to handle for such a young, immature being like me.

However, there is no reason to disappoint oneself by having such utopian-looking aspirations when, in fact, it could just start slowly, back in that one purpose of mine. Quoting what Abu Bakr says about the knowledge-action relationship “Without knowledge action is useless and knowledge without action is futile.” It is a gift given to me, put in these uncalloused hands of mine like a sword given to a new soldier, whose eyes will see the harshness of life out there, and whose hands will defeat, even forgive, enemies so many times. It will take years from my life to smith my own sword, some more in learning how to hold and use such a weapon; even more on the way to become a mature leader, a model to my students, colleagues, young writers.

So many 'what if-s' come along with getting to know what I do not know and the consequences of the way it will be used in my favour. It depends on what I am prioritizing in every step I take. I could fail to use the knowledge properly. Perhaps too much of it could actually make a villain out of me. I could choose to keep it for myself only, stay safe, undercover, feeling comfortable that the world does not need to know my name or what I do. As long as it is possessed by me, no one will know for sure whether it is a fair game or not.

Some people are born to be great. Others are destined to end up their lives like ghosts, no one ever talked about. Out of eight billion people in the entire world, who is going to be who? What would a poor man do if suddenly given a significant position, but lacking the knowledge? Definitely fail. How would a skilful person use the power in hands? If being in the midst of ignorants, most probably playing God to deceive them; under another influence, it would produce wisdom, self-development and success.

Everything is a matter of knowledge possession and progression. It either puts one on the pedestal and makes him one of a kind, or sends one to their own hell of unconsciousness, waiting to rip their own soul and be swallowed up from the oblivion.

# Wonder

Poem

Corner

I wonder how you stole my heart  
In just a moment, when the story begins.  
Neither me nor my heart realized that.  
A matter of minutes not an hour.  
Now that my heart embraces emotional instability  
I am getting touched bit by bit.  
The jealousy for you dominates my mind.  
I wonder if you did something to my heart.  
I wonder the sickness of my heart

Wondering, why can't I find your heart.  
My soul can't deny that you love me.  
Because eyes never lie.  
And I saw that through your silky eyes.  
Wondering if you know how I feel deep down  
It's not my fault but I can't deny my heart desires.  
Now my heart is shattered.  
But struggles continue to fight until triumph comes.  
Between you and your heart,  
One must have the desire to love me,  
But I wonder how one overcome the other.  
And at last my heart became a perfect loser.

That woefully failed under the shadow of  
unreturned love.  
Now my soul realized what belongs to it.  
And what not  
respectfully...

*By Dauda Ibrahim  
Dachia*



By Klea Pjetri

## ***“Where Distant Light Beckons the Soul”***

THROWN SOMEWHERE, FAR AWAY, IN A FORGOTTEN ROAD  
NO TOOL TO NAVIGATE ME, ONE SINGLE POINT TO TRACK  
WHEN, OUT OF NOWHERE, A BIT OF LIGHT I SAW  
GLOWING IN THIS FRAME PAINTED IN WHITE AND BLACK.

LIFELESS, CHARRY FIELDS SPRUNG ON MY LEFT AND RIGHT  
LIKE FACES MUTILATED FOR A BEAUTY SO CELESTIAL  
I HEARD THEM HOWLING HAUNTINGLY: HANG UP TIGHT!  
FOR, MY DEAR, THIS PATH ONLY LEADS TO YOUR BURIAL...

FROM THE GLORIOUS HEAVENS TO THE WHISPERING DUST  
NO RAIN, NO SEEDLING CAME OUT, FOR THEY WERE IRONCLAD  
DELIRIOUS, RUNNING OUT OF BREATH, ABOUT TO BUST  
I WAITED GOD TO COME OR DEMONS TO WITHSTAND

STINGS SO EXCRUCIATING I COULD BARELY DRAG MY FEET  
CRAWLING, MOANING, 'TILL MY BODY LET ME DOWN, AND DOWN I FELL  
AS THE DISTANT LIGHT FLICKERED, MY HEART SKIPPED A BEAT  
WAS THAT LIGHT A LIGHT? NOT THAT I COULD CLEARLY TELL.

DEATH, THE ONLY PEDESTRIAN AMIDST ALL THAT BLEAKNESS  
AND THE SOLID GROUND, THE BED I FOUND TOO HARD TO SLEEP  
BUT TOO QUICK TO GIVE MY LAST BREATH, I GUESS  
SO ALL I COULD DO WAS TO JUST COUNT DOWN AND THINK:

“IF I COULD JUST SET MY SOUL FREE FROM MY OWN DESTINY,  
FROM A BODY FEELING SO USELESS AND CUMBERSOME”  
RIGHT THEN, A HAND SO GENTLY TOOK THE SUICIDAL ROPE FROM ME  
AND A VOICE SO GODLY WHISPERED: “MY DAUGHTER, GREAT THINGS ARE TO  
COME!”

“WHY WAS IT SO EASY FOR US, AS KIDS, TO BELIEVE THAT WE WERE CAPABLE OF  
DOING ANYTHING? SUCH AS GOING TO THE MOON OR FLYING?  
NEVER LET THAT INNER CHILD GO, JUST HOLD ON TIGHT!”

# DON'T FORGET TO READ

## PREVIOUS ISSUES

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Issue 2 : Empowering Diversity

Issue 3 : New Beginnings

Issue 4: From Here To There

Issue 5: Independence



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