**A letter to humanity**

[Zara Maqbool](https://www.nation.com.pk/columnist/zara-maqbool)

August 24, 2023

[Opinions](https://www.nation.com.pk/opinions), [Columns](https://www.nation.com.pk/columns)

Dear Humanity,
I saw you for the first time when I was in Ami’s arms. I remember feeling warm and safe as I looked up at her smiling face.
You were present when Abu carried me in his arms and took me to the fun fair, and even though he did not buy me anything, I was overjoyed to be held and to look around.
You stared at me through my little brother’s adoring eyes and my sweet sister’s giggles, and as days passed by, you kept showing up in little moments of my life.
Dada’s hand on my head, that man with the big car giving us money, the sweets the shopkeeper uncle had offered us, Ami’s employer sending us delicious food, and some more times where I knew you existed, dearest humanity.
You promised to live and continue to, and I trusted you. I believed you even when Abu and Ami left me at the gigantic house in the city with its fleet of cars and big rooms. I was scared when Abu kissed me and left without saying anything, but I knew you would be by my side because you promised you would. I wondered why I was in this house and not with Ami and my siblings, but I was confident this was a mistake and that Abu would be back, and I would go back home any minute.
My home was broken and dirty, and so many days we would sleep without any food, but still, you took care of us, and Ami’s hugs and Abu’s tickling were more than enough. I was at peace.
When did you decide to leave me, humanity? I did not even notice your leaving, but slowly you had started to, and I was too naive to believe it, and I remained in denial. Was it when I was asked to wash so many clothes that the skin on my tiny fingers started to peel off? Was it because I could not sleep as my legs hurt terribly at night after staying on my feet all day?
Maybe when there was enough food in this house to feed an army, I was given two meals a day, primarily leftovers and a strange smell came from the food now and then that made me vomit, but I was scared too. Where were you, Humanity, when that woman who owned this house slapped me whenever she wanted to? Yes, I deserved it when I broke that pretty lamp, but it was a mistake, and was it my fault that the lamp was too heavy for me to carry it?
My head hurts when she hits me on it, and it bleeds too, but I am terrified to tell her that, and I dare not cry. When I cry, she beats me up more, doesn’t let me sleep, and wakes me up with kicks and slaps. Why does she hate me, humanity? Did you not say that we are better than animals and that we exist to love everyone around us? Why not me, then? Why are you not sending Abu so he can come and see how much pain I am in? Where are you hiding? Please come back and make this pain go away.
You came into my dream last night, and I saw myself in my home, and Ami was oiling my hair while I happily ate the ice cream that Abu got for me. I am praying hard, knowing you will not break your promise, and if you came into my dream, you will soon be the reality too. I am smiling and trying my best to work hard.
But why is this happening? Why is this man who drives those fancy cars touching me when no one is looking? He smiles when he does it, but I’m not too fond of it. It doesn’t feel right, humanity. It hurts. His hands are big and rough. I am lost. I don’t know what’s happening. The pain is unbearable. Please make him stop. I am confused. The blood is everywhere, but he doesn’t stop hurting me and looks strange when he does that. His eyes are terrifying.
Don’t break your promise. I beg of you. I will never ask for candy. I won’t ask for Abu or Ami. I will work all day and try my best not cry. Just make him stop.
I can’t breathe.
It’s dark here.
What is my sin for you abandoning me, humanity? Please forgive me for whatever I did. Keep your promise, please. Don’t be inhumane.
A little sinner.