

Normally, the moments that bind us unto the persons we love so much are made up of touches: small gestures of proximity. A pat on the shoulder, a reassuring squeeze of the hand, or an embrace that soothes away the day's cares. In my house, at a particular time of every month, there was another reality—one shaped by tradition and which felt to me like a thin curtain between my mother and me.

It is a somber sight to see Mom, when growing up, move about the house with quiet dignity, a shadow of the woman I knew those few days of every month. She would keep to herself, mostly in a room. I was told it was part of our culture, an unspoken rule that she was 'impure' on her periods. And quite honestly, as a child, I did not know what that meant. But then as I got older, that distance during these times felt less and more like a given, and more and more like a weight I couldn't shake.

Insane at times, I think, how one woman nurtured me, holding me as I cried, could suddenly turn into a person with whom even a casual brushing of arms was forbidden. Each time I look into her eyes during those moments, I see the tenderness that we cannot show in a simple touch. It is weird, but at those moments, I want to hug her the most.

This is a rule of separation that not only steals from me the opportunity to reassure my mother but also, it feels, steals parts of my very own humanity. It reminds me daily that this society I live in is multilayered—something I never asked for, yet something that molds me into what I am, and cannot deny. It's not blind rebellion; rather, it is the understanding and yearning that things should be different because I know they can be.

What does it mean when something as organic as menstruation renders a person 'untouchable' is effectively conveyed? Rationally, my mind says this is a litany of lies, but as each day goes by when mom walks by and avoids my glance, my heart bleeds. As if the shared warmth itself was too much to handle for these rituals. I am overcome with guilt for doing nothing more. I am an accomplice. And that's the hardest part, just feeling like a bystander in something that directly affects my family, something that makes the distance between us feel so palpable.

I used to wonder if this was something I would have to learn to live with. Could I ever speak up? Could I ever show Mom that, to me, she is nothing less than sacred during those moments? Her soft eyes, the way she attends to our home, how she still sees that I ate enough, from a distance—how could these ever be anything but pure?

But then I think of change. Change feels slow, the drip of water that finally shapes a stone. It feels like something that can take years, even decades, to unravel. But there's also fire in me. Fire that won't let me stay quiet, which says this doesn't have to be the reality for the next generation. It makes me scream aloud that respect for traditions shouldn't be at the cost of love and humanity.

I have seen how silence creeps in between people, burrowing deeper with time. And I know this silence between my mom and me on those days is not a choice that I want to live with forever. But how could I break it without breaking her heart?

It is not just about me, either. I know that the world outside my home mirrors these very same dynamics. Women everywhere are reduced, even if only temporarily, by rituals that cast them aside. And for what? Because their bodies, in all their natural processes, have been marked as unclean by an age-old belief system?

All of me urges to be that one person who finds a way to change this. To speak for my mother, to speak for all women who endure in silence. I want to be that person who can say it's okay if the son holds his mother's hand, be the day of the month whatsoever. I want to remind all that love doesn't have any boundaries dictated by superstition.

And maybe that's where I will start: not with grand gestures, but with conversations, with this gentle yet firm belief that things could be different. I'll talk to my mom-ma and tell her how it feels, even if she is not touching me. I'll tell my friends, my family, any person who'll listen, 'cause I understand clearly that change does not come overnight, but it commences when someone even dares to challenge the status quo.

It's not easy standing in front of a wall that has been there for hundreds of years and saying, "This needs to come down." But every wall starts with one crack, and maybe-just maybe-I can be that crack. I don't have all the answers, nor do I even know how mom would react if I told her what I actually think of this whole ritual. But I owe it to myself, and to her, that I should try.

The world is full of things which we accept simply because they have always been that way. But I don't want to live in a world where my mother, or any woman, has to be made to feel 'less than' because of something as human as her periods. I want a world where love, respect, and equality transcend the rules that divide us.

So here I am, stuck between tradition and change, love and silence. And maybe I will never know how much my mother feels. Maybe I will always have questions that will remain unanswered. But what I know is this: I will not be a sheep. I will not be one of those people who just tag along. If there's a means of bridging that gap, of healing the distance this tradition creates, then I'll find it. And I'll do it with compassion, respect, and an unshakeable faith in making a change.

Because, deep in my heart, I believe in a world in which the one we love will never be un-touch-able-where every son can hug his moth-er and every wom-an is seen, al-ways, as whole.