Excerpts from *I am Malala* by Malala Yousafzai

1. “Near us on our street there was a family with a girl my age called Safina and two boys similar in age to my brothers, Babar and Basit. We all played cricket on the street or rooftops together, but I knew as we got older the girls would be expected to stay inside. We’d be expected to cook and serve our brothers and fathers. While boys and men could roam freely about town, my mother and I could not go out without a male relative to accompany us, even if it was a five-year-old boy! This was the tradition.

I had decided very early I would not be like that. My father always said, ‘Malala will be free as a bird.’ I dreamed of going to the top of Mount Elum like Alexander the Great to touch Jupiter and even beyond the valley. But, as I watched my brothers running across the rood, flying their kites and skillfully flicking the strings back and forth to cut each other’s down, I wondered how free a daughter could ever be” (Yousafzai 26).

1. “Under Zia’s regime life for women in Pakistan became much more rusticated. Jinnah said, ‘No struggle can ever succeed without women participating side by side with men. There are two powers in the world; one is the sword and the other is the pen. There is a third power stronger than both, that of women.’ But General Zia brought in Islamic laws which reduced a woman’s evidence in court to count for only half that of a man’s. Soon our prisons were full of cases like that of a thirteen-year-old girl who was raped and became pregnant and was then sent to prison for adultery because she couldn’t produce four male witnesses to prove it was a crime. A woman couldn’t even open a bank account without a man’s permission. As a nation we have always been good at hockey, but Zia made our female hockey players wear baggy trousers instead of shorts, and stopped women playing some sports altogether” (Yousafzai 31).
2. “His own village school had been just a small building. Many of his classes were taught under a tree on the bare ground. There were no toilets, and the pupils went to the fields to answer the call of nature. Yet he says he was actually lucky. His sisters- my aunts- did not go to school at all, just like millions of girls in my country. Education had been a great gift for him. He believe that lack of education was the root of all Pakistan’s problems. Ignorance allowed politicians to fool people and bad administrators to be reelected. He believed schooling should be available for all, rich and poor, boys and girls. The school that my father dreamed of would have desks and a library, computers, bright posters on the walls, and, most importantly, washrooms” (Yousafzai 41).
3. “The year before I was born a group called the Taliban led by a one-eyes mullah had taken over the country and was burning girls’ schools. They were forcing men to grow beards as long as a lantern and women to wear burqas. Wearing a burqa is like walking inside big fabric shuttlecock with only a grille to see through and on hot days it’s like an oven. At least I didn’t have to wear one. He said that the Taliban had even banned women from laughing out loud or wearing white shoes, as white was ‘a color that belonged to men.’ Women were being locked up and beaten just for wearing nail varnish. I shivered when he told me such things (Yousafzai 67).
4. “‘I am representing good Muslims and we all think your girls’ school is haram and a blasphemy. You should close it. Girls should not be going to school,’ he continued. ‘A girl is so sacred she should be in purdah, and so private that there is no lady’s name in the Quran, as God doesn’t want her to be named”’ (Yousafzai 94).
5. “Our school was a haven from the horrors outside. All the other girls in my class wanted to be doctors, but I decided I wanted to be an inventor and make an anti-Taliban machine which would sniff them out and destroy their guns. But of course at school we were under threat too, and some of my friends dropped out. Fazlullah kept broadcasting that girls should stay home, and his men had started blowing up schools, usually during nighttime curfew when children were not there” (Yousafzai 137).
6. “My parents never once suggested I should withdraw from school, ever. Though we loved school, we hadn’t realized how important education was until the Taliban tried to stop us. Going to school, reading and doing our homework wasn’t just a way of passing time, it was our future. The Taliban could take our pens and books, but they couldn’t stop our minds from thinking” (Yousafzai 146).
7. “I know the importance of education because my pens and books were taken from me by force. But girls of Swat are not afraid of anyone. We have continued without education” (Yousafzai 214).
8. “As we crossed the Malakand Pass I saw a young girl selling oranges. She was scratching marks on a piece of paper with a pencil to account for the oranges she had sold, as she could not read or write. I took a photo of her and vowed I would do everything in my power to help educate girls just like her. This was the war I was going to fight “(Yousafzai 217).
9. “I wanted to reach all people living in poverty, those children forced to work and those who suffer from terrorism or lack of education. Deep in my heart I hoped to reach every child who could take courage from my words and stand up for his or her rights” (Yousafzai 310).
10. “Sadly, my own country, Pakistan, is one of the worst places: 51 million children don’t even go to primary school even though in our constitution it says every child has that right. We have almost fifty million illiterate adults, two thirds of whom are women, like my own mother” (Yousafzai 312).

1. “Peace in every home, every street, every village, every country- this is my dream. Education for every boy and every girl in the world. To sit down on a chair and read my books with all my friends at school is my right. TO see each and every human being with a smile of happiness is my wish. I am Malala. My world has changed but I have not (Yousafzai 313).

Excerpts from *A Narrative of Frederick Douglass*

1. “I have found that, to make a contented slave, it is necessary to make a thoughtless one. It is necessary to darken his moral and mental vision, and, as far as possible, to annihilate the power of reason. He must be able to detect no inconsistencies in slavery; he must be made to feel that slavery is right; and he can be brought to that only when he ceases to be a man” (Douglass 58).

2. “As I writhed under it, I would at times feel that learning to read had been a curse rather than a blessing. It had given me a view of my wretched condition, without the remedy. It opened my eyes to the horrible pit, but to no ladder upon which to get out. In moments of agony, I envied my fellow-slaves for their stupidity. I have often wished myself a beast” (Douglass 24).

3. “If at any one time of my life more than another, I was made to drink the bitterest dregs of slavery, that time was during the first six months of my stay with Mr. Covey…I was broken in body, soul, and spirit. My natural elasticity was crushed, my intellect languished, the disposition to read departed, the cheerful spark that lingered about my eye died; the dark night of slavery closed in upon me; and behold a man transformed into a brute!” (Douglass 37).

4. “If you teach that nigger (speaking of myself) how to read, there would be no keeping him. It would forever unfit him to be a slave. He would at once become unmanageable, and of no value to his master. As to himself, it could do him no good, but a great deal of harm” (Douglass 20).

5. “I now understood what had been to me a most perplexing difficulty—to wit, the white man’s power to enslave the black man… The very decided manner with which he spoke, and strove to impress his wife with the evil consequences of giving me instruction, served to convince me that he was deeply sensible of the truths he was uttering… and the argument which he so warmly urged, against my learning to read, only served to inspire me with a desire and determination to learn. In learning to read, I owe almost as much to the bitter opposition of my master, as to the kindly aid of my mistress. I acknowledge the benefit of both” (Douglass 20).

6. “The reading of these documents enabled me to utter my thoughts, and to meet the arguments brought forward to sustain slavery; but while they relieved me of one difficulty, they brought on another even more painful than the one of which I was relieved. The more I read, the more I was led to abhor and detest my enslavers. I could regard them in no other light than a band of successful robbers, who had left their homes, and gone to Africa, and stolen us from our homes, and in a strange land reduced us to slavery” (Douglass 24).

8. “I held my Sabbath school at the house of a free colored man, whose name I deem it imprudent to mention; for should it be known, it might embarrass him greatly, though the crime of holding the school was committed ten years ago. I had at one time over forty scholars, and those of the right sort, ardently desiring to learn…I look back to those Sundays with an amount of pleasure.” not to be expressed. They were great days to my soul. The work of instructing my dear fellow-slaves was the sweetest engagement with which I was ever blessed” (Douglass 48).