

been shot, but I didn't recognise their names. She explained that the bullet had entered through the side of my left eye where there was a scar, travelled eighteen inches down to my left shoulder and stopped there. It could have taken out my eye or gone into my brain. It was a miracle I was alive.

I felt nothing, maybe just a bit satisfied. 'So they did it.' My only regret was that I hadn't had a chance to speak to them before they shot me. Now they'd never hear what I had to say. I didn't even think a single bad thought about the man who shot me – I had no thoughts of revenge – I just wanted to go back to Swat. I wanted to go home.

After that images started to swim around in my head but I wasn't sure what was a dream and what was reality. The story I remember of being shot is quite different from what really happened. I was in another school bus with my father and friends and another girl called Gul. We were on our way home when suddenly two Taliban appeared dressed in black. One of them put a gun to my head and the small bullet that came out of it entered my body. In this dream he also shot my father. Then everything is dark, I'm lying on a stretcher and there is a crowd of men, a lot of men, and my eyes are searching for my father. Finally I see him and try to talk to him but I can't get the words out. Other times I am in a lot of places, in Jinnah Market in Islamabad, in Cheena Bazaar, and I am shot. I even dreamed that the doctors were Taliban.

As I grew more alert, I wanted more details. People coming in were not allowed to bring their phones, but Dr Fiona always had her iPhone with her because she is an emergency doctor. When she put it down, I grabbed it to search for my name on Google. It was hard as my double vision meant I kept typing in the wrong letters. I also wanted to check my email, but I couldn't remember the password.

On the fifth day I got my voice back but it sounded like someone else. When Rehanna came in we talked about the shooting from an Islamic perspective. 'They shot at me,' I told her.

'Yes, that's right,' she replied. 'Too many people in the Muslim world can't believe a Muslim can do such a thing,' she said. 'My mother, for example, would say they can't be Muslims. Some people call themselves Muslims but their actions are not Islamic.' We talked about how things happen for different reasons, this happened to me, and how education for females not just males is one of our Islamic rights. I was speaking up for my right as a Muslim woman to be able to go to school.

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Once I got my voice back, I talked to my parents on Dr Javid's phone. I was worried about sounding strange. 'Do I sound different?' I asked my father.

'No,' he said. 'You sound the same and your voice will only get better. Are you OK?' he asked.

'Yes,' I replied, 'but this headache is so severe, I can't bear the pain.'

My father got really worried. I think he ended up with a bigger headache than me. In all the calls after that he would ask, 'Is the headache increasing or decreasing?'

After that I just said to him, 'I'm OK.' I didn't want to upset him and didn't complain even when they took the staples from my head and gave me big injections in my neck. 'When are you coming?' I kept asking.

By then they had been stuck in the army hostel at the hospital in Rawalpindi for a week with no news about when they might come to Birmingham. My mother was so desperate that she told my father, 'If there is no news by tomorrow I will go on a hunger strike.' Later that day my father went to see the major in charge of security and told him. The major looked alarmed. Within ten minutes my father was told arrangements would be made for them to move to Islamabad later that day. Surely