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Anger or just Nonsense

Has he gone mute? Why did he stop speaking? These were all the questions popping in their heads. A kid roughly aged 4, who used to talk too much, suddenly stopped making little noises. That kid was me. My family was worried about me. They waited for a few days and tried their best to make me speak. They were probably thinking that I have some medical issues that made me unable to speak, but this wasn’t the case at all. It was a completely different story.

Pakistan is considered a third-world country, which does not have good medical facilities in rural areas, and my family background is mostly farming so we used to live in a small town. I was born in a hospital in Faisalabad, a city in Pakistan, which is almost 2 hours of drive away from my hometown. I have a huge family in Pakistan, and everyone was extremely happy about my birth. I remember hearing that my father was so happy that he asked the bakery owner to give free sweets to everyone who come to his shop and paid for it. I was named “Aziz” after my great grandfather, who used to be very polite and a noble person. Aziz is a word of Urdu, and Arabic that means ‘respected and beloved’.

I started speaking small words at roughly 2 years of age and began to talk in proper sentences at almost two and a half or three years of age. The distance to most of my uncles’ and aunties’ houses was walkable and my sisters were 8 and 9 years old so we used to go there a lot often. I used to enjoy speaking a lot and always had a topic to talk about. Unlike most kids, I wasn’t selective of whom to talk with. I remember my mom told me once that when I was very young and started to speak, I went outside the house and there was a taxi standing.

I asked the driver if he was free and said, *“Bhai hum ny kahin jana hy”* (Uncle we need to go somewhere). He agreed to wait for my other family members outside and waited for more than an hour. After that long, he knocked at the door and asked my mom to hurry. My mom was really surprised and explained to him the whole story. Since he waited for that long, she also paid him for the wasted time.

This wasn’t the only time I had caused trouble, there are so many. Considering I was a child and did not have much sense, my parents did not say much to me. In no time, a year went by, and I turned 4. I continued to speak a lot with my family and others but stopped causing trouble like before. I stopped causing problems, but I was a stammer. I was not able to speak some words fluently, especially words or sentences starting with the letter N. Not many people could understand me. My parent, and a few people in my family that could understand me, used to explain everything I said to others.

I recall that at that time my father came back from Saudi Arabia, he went there for Hajj (pilgrimage). Few of my family members started to advise me to talk less and in no time that few members changed into most members. The fact that parents were also a part of those people was heartbreaking for me to bear. I was very sad and angry at the same time. I started regretting that I could speak and wished I couldn’t. That wish gave my naïve brain a crazy idea: just stop speaking. I still have a bad habit that if I said no to something then it’s extremely hard to convert it into a yes. Since I already had decided to stop speaking, from the following morning I stopped talking with everyone. I took it so seriously that I even stopped talking with my parents and friends.

This gave my family a lot of tension. Although my family is well educated, no one is in the medical field and there was no internet at that time. They tried to make me speak in every way possible but after I didn’t speak for a couple of days, they thought I got some kind of disorder.

My parents took me to the best doctor in the nearest city. They explained the whole scenario to him and according to them, it was *“He is very talkative and was speaking just fine before he slept but since he woke up, he hasn’t said a single word”* The doctor was surprised because it was the first case like this, he did some examination and performed a few tests but there was nothing wrong with any of the results. That’s when he told my parents that I stopped speaking intentionally.

At first, they didn’t accept that, but as the doctor dug into the story my parents realized that they were the part of people who told me to talk less. They weren’t expecting me to give such an extreme reaction to a normal thing. I clearly remember that the doctor asked my parents to promise me that they will never stop me from talking and said, *“Don’t stop him from speaking as this can affect his health very badly”*.

Everyone in my family promised to never stop me from speaking. After that, as no one stopped me from talking, I started talking very fast and most of the people were not able to understand me, even my primary and middle school teachers. Some of my teachers told me to speak slowly but I never listened. I realized that I speak very fast when I made new friends in High school, and they couldn’t understand me. After that I started talking slowly but sometimes I still talk fast when I speak my mother language. Despite the fact that I have grown now and changed a lot of my habits like talking a lot with others, my family still never stops me from speaking and I can talk for as long as I want. But now I have changed myself and don’t talk so much even with my family. It is not regretted this time; I just think that we all should keep ourselves a secret to some extent.