She defines fashion as something deeply personal. "Fashion is authenticity," she said. "It's not about trends or brands. It's about how you carry yourself, how you express your truth." For Aklima, style doesn't live in the heels or the gown. It lives in the courage to wear your scars, your softness, your story — all with grace.

When we asked her to define confidence, Aklima gave an answer that could sit as a quote on a teenager's wall. "Confidence isn't thinking I'm better than everyone. It's knowing I don't have to be better than anyone. I just love myself the way I am."

However, it wasn't always like this. Although she was never bullied or body-shamed, her mental health once convinced her she was "good for nothing." Now, she thanks her younger self for surviving those days.

Aklima's story is not simply about pageantry. It's about possibility. It's about a young woman who saw the beauty in her surroundings, felt the pulse of a rising generation, and stepped onto an international stage, not to prove herself but to hold up a mirror to her country. Her journey stands as a reminder that you don't have to fit the mould to be meaningful. You just have to be honest with who you are and dare to show the world.

And if Aklima can start with herself, so can you. In her own words, "You might feel lost right now. That's okay. When you know exactly where you're going, you might be on someone else's path. But when you don't, that's your own path. You're building it. So, hang in there. That's the beauty of life. Something beautiful might soon unfold."

Before we parted, Aklima took a moment to thank those who've supported her along the way -especially Azra Mahmood, who inspired her the most along the way. "I pick up little bits of inspiration from everyone I meet," she said.

And that, perhaps, is Aklima's real strength: not just being a girl who stood tall on a global stage, but someone who never stopped seeing the worth in others or in herself.

ByJannatul Bushra
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