

A Heart to Heart Letter to 'The living legend' Amitabh Bachchan



अभिषेक

जया व श्वेता



स्व डॉ हरिवंशराय बच्चन
श्रीमती तेजी बच्चन के पुत्र

अमिताभ बच्चन
आनंद, नमकहराम,
अभिमान, शोले,
दीवार, जंजीर,
सिलसिला, खाकी,
मोहब्बतें, ब्लैक



जन्मदिन की हार्दिक शुभकामनाएं अभय शर्मा ११ अक्टूबर

Respected Sir,

The 'Legion of Honour' from France and 'Star of the Millenium' from Britain, you are really great indeed. Though there was no iota of doubt about your capabilities on silver screen yet the international recognitions always add feathers to one's cap. It is only time that India wakes up and honour you with the prestigious Bharat Ratna.

I have been putting articles, poems and pictures, questions and views on my personal website. If you ever find time please do have a look at <http://www.geocities.com/kvians>, some of my expectations from you are also depicted, a few were also faxed to your residence.

I once conducted a monologue interview with you in three parts. Realising it would hardly be feasible to get to you, I chose to write on your behalf. I can only hope that there were no gross mistakes on what I had written. The kind of heights you have achieved is a matter of great honour to all Indians. My sincere birthday wishes to you for a healthy and rewarding life as it had always been.

It would be inappropriate to call it quits without my views on your films and sharing a bit of my family background. For me, I believe Abhimaan was the very best, Namak Haraam and Sholay come very close to the top rankers.

Anand was the first movie I saw in theatre when we were in Port Blair, it was arranged from our school- Kendriya Vidyalaya at Aberdeen Bazar. I knew you would achieve stardom soon. There were quite a few years of my life when I saw only Amitabh starrers and today I have the largest number of your movies in my personal collection.

Deewar, Do Anjaane, Kabhi-Kabhi, Trishul, Great Gambler, Kala Patthar, Don, Kasma-Vaade, Mr. Natwarlal, Majboor, Zameer, Khoon Pasina, Hera-Pheri, Parvarish, Ram Balram, Muqaddar ka Sikandar, Lavaris, Adalat, Shaan and Amar Akbar Anthony were some of the movies I saw during my young age before coming over to Bombay.

I particularly loved the songs Luk- chhup luk-chhup jao na, Mere paas aao mere doston, Dekh sakta hoon main kuchh bhi hote hue, Main pal do pal ka shayar hoon, Re meet na mila re manka, My name is Anthony gonsalves, Rote hue aate hain sab, Yamma yamma yeh khoobsoorat shama, Aati rahengi baharein and all the Anand and DON songs. Some of these were sung endless number of times for the kids in the family.

Some of them have now grown into big achievers in the family. Nitin or Bantoo is with Google at California after having bagged the 'Star of the Year' award from Yahoo last year. Nandita or Kukki, finished her Ph. D. in Biotechnology from CalTech and now is at Bangalore. Rajyashree or Bittoo, my youngest sister did specialization in Nuclear Medicine and is serving in London. Sonal or labboo works for HRD in a reputed publishing house of Delhi. Shashank or Binnoo finished his MBBS from Nairs in Mumbai, spent a couple of years at London is now posted in Australia. Manasi or Moni is presently Information Manager with FICCI at Delhi. Meesha is simply Meesha, no nicknames for her, is doing Ph. D. At CFTRI, Mysore. They all mean so much to my existence, I think few would have such a brigade of outstanding children around. So many brilliant kids to interact with was a lovely experience. I spent lot of my time with them at Delhi during their formative years. You were always a part of discussions apart from cricket and science.

It was my first day in Bombay when Silsila was released, within few hours of reaching Bombay, I saw the night show of the movie with friends from UDCT Matunga. I had come for my interview at Bhabha Atomic Research Centre.

There were quite a few occasions when I expressed my faith and loyalty to you. During my NDA interview in 1977 at Bangalore, I told the Captain (Naval) to a question about you and Rekha that when a person achieves stardom such baseless views are usually aired to tarnish his image! Anyway even if it was true, I do not care now, after all you too are human and have a right to err !

I think it started with a question about my interests, I had told the chairman that I was very fond of Dr. Harivanshrai Bachchan, the creator of Madhushala. He had promptly added – what about his son Amitabh Bachchan. I erred and in confusion uttered, he too is my big fan! Oh what a folly that was, and how open heartedly the captain had laughed at the joke, which actually was a mistake. I was then asked the above question, I don't know if he was convinced by my arguments or not yet it was an outright support for someone I loved so much. I was selected for Army and Navy, however, I missed Khadakvasla by a few numbers in the merit list! During the interview week I had seen 'Don' twice with different groups of friends from all over the country, who were there to make it big to join the defence forces.

It was at Hope 86 that I came very close to you but still could not meet. I was at the Brabourne stadium railings, could not buy the tickets, maybe for lack of enough money, class I government servants were not paid enough those days, not that they are paid well today. I had used a rolled up newspaper to focus on you and none others on the stage. After few hours, I could not resist the temptation and jumped inside. Rajesh Khanna and Shatrughan Sinha were moving around and later I bumped into Dilip saab, I requested him, if I could meet Amitabh Bachchan, he said, go inside! But our policeman, they did not yield and I had to return home, I was particularly dejected the next morning, not for not having met you but for the fact that Smita Patil was declared dead!

Like as it happens in the life of any other professional or a person, you too had some lean period. Except for a couple of films your selection of quite some movies was not good, some people had taken you for ride during ABCL days and people thought that an era was about to come to an end. I think post coolie you were not entirely happy with your films and announced retirement to probably get refocused.

Then there was this great comeback staged with the launching of 'Kaun Banega crorepati', I truly consider KBC as your reincarnation. I myself was of the opinion that you should have embraced some programs on Doordarshan long back. In fact, I had once wanted that Vinod Dua aired few (one or two) general knowledge questions in his Good Morning India programme and provided answers the next day, however, he did not pay heed to it.

I believe KBC was the best chapter in the history of television programming in India. It was not unexpected that it proved to be the perfect path for you to regain supremacy. Oh! You were simply extraordinary in KBC. I personally felt so very satisfied, I had recently only created a similar prolog program – 'Know your India', on the golden jubilee of our Independence. Someone like you

anchored such a program was a novel and revolutionary idea, my thinking had got a footing. It is needless to state here that KBC success story marked the beginning of your second journey to glory. Strong effective voice coupled with excellent command over the language and unbelievable presentation skills they all made KBC an instant hit nation wide. It was a great effort and you deserved the every inch of the pat on the back you got for doing KBC.

Then followed some of the films like Dev, Mohabbatein, Kabhi khushi kabhi gham, Ankhen, Khakee, Waqt, Viruddh, Black, Sarkar among others which reestablished you to your old esteem, right into the heart of Indians all over again, along came a plethora of advertisements and you became an instant selling brand. My seven year old son Amrit too likes or rather loves you very much, during the KBC days he was very young and used to call you 'itabh chamman', he is slowly drifting towards Abhishek.

Some other day I would elaborate on the role of a scientist engaged in the concept unification of the subcontinent through science, sports, theatre and literacy drive, who does not accept defeat despite the obstacles and mockery he faces from all circles. If you are guessing that it is my own story, you are not entirely off the mark, but instead of putting my five feet five inches on frame I would rather like Abhishek to play the scientist and you to play the charismatic mentor who helps him achieve success! The United States of Indian Subcontinent will be born ! I would tentatively like to title it Apeksha or Nai Duniya!

I would always regret to have not offered my last homages to Dr. Harivanshrai Bachchan the doyen of modern Hindi Poetry in person, and here I think or rather believe that your popularity had come in my way!

My regards to all your family members and special wishes for speedy recovery of Teji Bachchan ji.

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