



Main Shaayar Badnaam

September 16, 2017

Lest you think that I only talk of Gulzar, I am writing about an outstanding piece of writing by Anand Bakshi for the film Namak Haraam. The film, directed by Hrishikesh Mukherjee, was the second film featuring Amitabh Bachchan and Rajesh Khanna after Anand. Namak Haraam was, unfortunately, their last ever film together. It was clear by the end of the film that Amitabh was becoming the crowd favorite. Perhaps that is one reason why the two of them never worked together again.

I find it strange that Anand Bakshi wrote the lyrics for Namak Haraam because one of the writers of the movie was Gulzar himself who is an accomplished lyricist himself. The song that I want to talk about is Mai Shaayar badnaam (yes, the same song that I talked about in my note titled "Success".... An excellent piece of writing on my part, if I might say so myself without any false modesty!)

One of the song's paragraphs goes like this:

Main Shaayar Badnaam...

Sholon pe chalna tha

Kaaton pe sona tha

Aur abhi jee bhar ke

Kismat pe rona tha

Jaane aise kitne

Baaki Chodke kaam

Main Chala

Mai Chala

Rajesh Khanna sings this song while a young alcoholic poet, Raza Murad, is lying on his deathbed. It talks of the poet's life with its unfulfilled promises and tasks left incomplete. This song is therefore a song of unfulfilled dreams and desires- a sad song- a song of pain and disappointment.

But think about this – It is a song of disillusionment and disappointment only because it is shot on a young dying person. But what if – what if this song was sung for an old person lying on his death bed. Is it not then a song of a life that is lived to the fullest till the very last? Is it not then the song of a person who never rested on his laurels; who till the last breath had a reason to live; who never gave up on life and therefore had tasks to do, milestones to reach and new vistas to conquer? Is it not then a song of a life well lived?



When we look at that the song from this perspective, does it not teach the listener how to lead a good life? Teach that a life should be lived to its fullest; that at every moment a person must have goals and desires, things to do, new skills to learn, new places to visit, new people to meet and new tasks to do. Doesn't the song then teach that at no moment in life should a person rest on his laurels and retire from life?

I believe that this song does teach us all of these things. One of the ways to live an active life is to continue to work for a living without ever retiring. But not all of us work at jobs that will have us beyond a certain age. Nor is it possible for all of us to run our own business, one that can keep us gainfully employed forever. Most of us will have to, at some point, cease to earn, and subsequently look for other goals in life that can keep us mentally active and involved. Goals that drive us; goals that can make us wake up each day with enthusiasm.

I do not claim to know what these things could be for each one of us. By its very nature, goals that drive us will differ for each one of us. But it behooves each and every one of us to look at this song as an inspiration – a way to live our lives, almost an anthem for our lives.

We all hope to not die very young, but that really isn't in our hands. What is in our control is only what we do with the time that we have. What we should aim for therefore, is that whenever it is our time to check out, we can and will be able to sing this song which talks about things not yet done and about dreams not yet achieved, and in general about unfulfilled desires.

While this is possible and we should all aim for this kind of living, aiming to do so does have an impact on our retirement planning. We will definitely need more money than we think we need, because leading a life of activity well past our earning age will require taking on expenses a normal retired person will not have.

But no one need despair. If you wish to lead the kind of life I have talked about then quickly call me for a coffee! Just imagine, for the price of just one coffee, I will cull any inefficiencies and redundancies in your investments and simplify your investments, so that you are clear about what your investments are set to achieve. Like us, even your investments should have a purpose and character. Once the investments have a purpose and a certain character that matches our personality (like simplicity or aggression for example) it becomes easy for us to stick to our investment plans.

If we stick to our investment plans, we give our investments the greatest chance of succeeding, and thus we will give ourselves the greatest chance of living a life that will allow us to say, "Main Shaayar Badnaam", when we check out.