

Continued from last month....

St. Columba's School

Right or wrong...east or west, my school is the best. St. Columba's was a strict disciplinarian school run by Irish brothers. One could not wear the wrong uniform or grow their hair beyond a certain length. Many a times I had to get my hair cut in front of the whole assembly of students early in the morning. The barber used to be from a nearby street-side shop who hadn't bathed or brushed his teeth. He was as sorry to be there as I was to be sitting on his uncomfortable chair. And before beginning his hack job, he would ask if I wanted a Dharmendra or an Amitabh cut. By the time he was through, I just hoped I didn't look like a porcupine or a pineapple. My hair never recovered from these frequent attacks. :-)

I was quite a good student, though I never studied throughout the year. The only time I studied was the night before the exam, when I wouldn't sleep a wink and go straight for the exam. I did rather well and this gave me the opportunity to do a whole lot of interesting stuff in school.

In School...

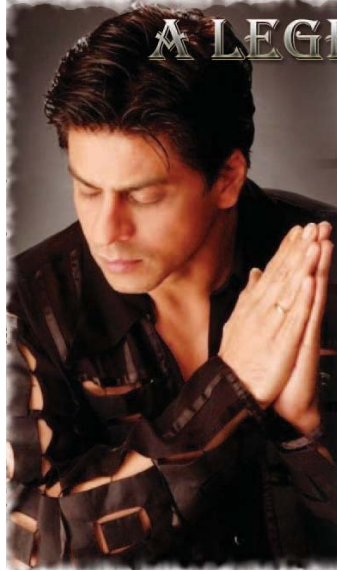
My favourite soccer stars are Socrates, Pele, Maradona and Mattheus. And I loved Aslam Sher Khan and wanted to be like him and represent the country.

Electronics was my favourite subject at my A levels, and I think I got the highest marks in it when I passed out. Mathematics was my weakest subject in school and I still have a problem with numbers. So much so if someone tells me a phone number I have to ask for it several times before I can write it down on paper. I even forget my office and residence phone number.

English, and especially Shakespeare, was my other favourite.

Mumtaz...

Mumtaz was my absolute favourite. We



Is born.... Part 2

used to listen to the radio at night and this is when all my dancing abilities were best showcased. One had to just tell me that the song on radio was from a Mumtaz film and I would move 20 frames per second, like the way people move in the old Charlie Chaplin films.

I loved the way she moved her hips. I think nobody in this world can be as beautiful a sight as she used to be. She was sensual, innocent, naughty and very energetic, all at the same time. She was the first personality I mimicked. I loved to walk like her and dance like her.

Usually actors have very important personalities and performers as their idols. Mine was Mumtaz. Not to say that she was unimportant or not special. What I mean is that for a guy she was an unconventional role model. To me she was the single most important cause of my tilt towards anything that had vaguely to do with the performing arts.

My Father

My father, Mir Taj Mohammed, was 10 years older to my mother, Fatima, and therefore much older to me. I remember him as a gentle giant - 6'2" tall with typically Pathan good looks, grey eyes and brown hair. But he was very well-read and well educated too. He did MA, LLB and knew six languages - Persian, Sanskrit, Pushtu, Punjabi, Hindi and English. He was, in his time, the youngest freedom fighter.

Even today whenever I bump into people who knew him, they talk about his sense of humour, and how he was a gentleman. And I

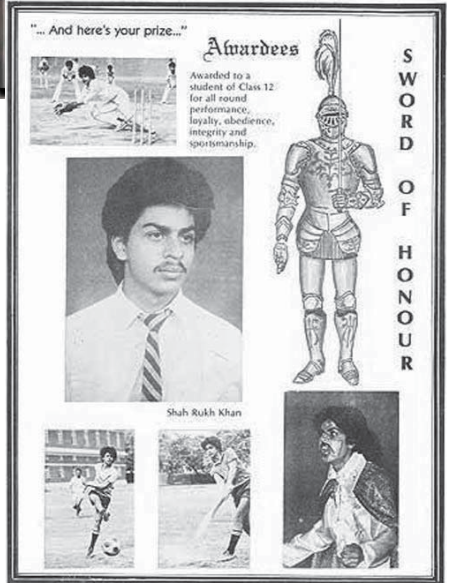
remember the same about him. I wish I could be like him or bring up my child in the same way that he brought us up but I don't know if I will be able to because I am more temperamental than he was.

Somehow, my sister and I listened to him more than we listened to our mother. He was gentler than her. Of course, my mother loved us too but with my father we were friends. We used to sit for hours and listen to him talk on various topics. We used to call each other 'yaar'. I did call him 'papa' but yaar was used more often. Probably because he never cajoled or pampered us like people do their children but instead, always treated us as individuals, as adults. It was always one-to-one.

My father had a great sense of humour. We used to stay on the top floor of our building. Once, an old couple staying on the ground

floor complained to my father, "Upar se cheese neeche aati hai." My father laughed at the comment and said, "Newton discovered that long ago."

In another incident, I was teasing a south Indian girl next door by blowing up their letter boxes. Her mother came home to complain and my father opened the door. The lady could not speak Hindi well and she said, "Aapka ladka ladki ko chedta hai meri." He replied, "Is she as pretty as you are?" She said, "What?" My father repeated his question. She replied, "Yes..." My father said, "Then I don't blame him. If I had met you earlier even I would have been after you!" She smiled.



Besides his sense of humour, another quality I have imbibed from my father is his passion for reading. My father was a very good human being. I try to imbibe that too. I think I have inherited his goodness, though not to the full extent. The only aspect I didn't inherit was his love for gardening. My father even enjoyed talking to flowers but I have never done that. Perhaps when I am older...

I have definitely inherited my absent-mindedness from my father. I have seen him walk out of the house in just a shirt, shoes, socks - without his pants! He would eat his breakfast in the toilet! He would just forget he was in there. I too forget names, I forget to eat sometimes. But where work is concerned I do not forget anything.

To be continued...

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Courtesy www.bollywoodboards.com