

## I've apologised to Shah Rukh over blog: Amitabh

Superstar Amitabh Bachchan is enjoying his blogging experience and 'the ugly abuses, the healthy criticism' that come along with it. The Bollywood icon has clarified that his remarks about Shah Rukh Khan's quiz show on his blog were misinterpreted by the media and he has apologised to the actor since then.

"I narrated on my blog what transpired during one my meetings with TV heads, who had come with proposals to me to do a show for them. I asked them questions on the viability of game shows. They described to me the falling ratings, which included shows done by me and by others as well," Amitabh, who is currently in Cannes with his family, explained in a telephone interview with IANS.

He added: "I merely transferred these talks to my blog purely to seek opinion, not glory, and the next thing I read is that it is an attempt on my part to show Shah Rukh in poor light, which was entirely incorrect and a load of rubbish. I have since, on my blog, apologised to Shah Rukh and those offended by this wrong assumption.

"I will apologise to Shah Rukh a hundred times if there is an iota of doubt in his mind about my conduct and behaviour towards him."

On visiting Cannes, he said the family was there to be with daughter-in-law Aishwarya, who is a brand ambassador of L'Oreal, and to spend quality time with one another.

"We went to the opening with her (Aishwarya) and a few films together, but mostly it is to be with family because we've all been away from each other for a long time in different parts of the world. It's lovely to just be together and catch up, before we drift away to our respective schedules," Amitabh said.

Excerpts from the interview:

Q. Are you in Cannes? Are you representing a film?

A. Yes I am in Cannes and with the family. This is a private visit and there are no films I am representing. I believe there was an article criticising us for not visiting the India pavilion. Well, firstly, this is a private visit and moreover, no one has invited us. And secondly, I am a little wary of government invitations. They invite you to be chief guest at a function and when you arrive there, tell you you are not invited.

We are here to be with Aishwarya, who is here in an official capacity as brand ambassador for L'Oreal. We went to the opening with her and a few films together, but mostly it is to be with family because we've all been away from each other for a long time in different parts of the world. It's lovely to just be together and catch up before we drift away to our respective schedules.

Q. How satisfying has the experience of blogging been so far?

A. It has been a most wonderful experience and I have wondered why this was not known to me earlier. The speed of communication the world over, the responses to my thoughts, the adulation and endearment expressed by well-wishers, the ugly abuses, the healthy criticism, the demand for

more on my father's works all of it has been educative and awe-inspiring. It has been like talking to each one of them personally.

Q. Is it very time consuming?

A. It is time consuming because I read all the messages myself and I write my blog personally too. I have not permitted the server to allow comments to go through a 'moderator' because I want a fair, democratic approach to be practised. To cope with this I sleep a little less perhaps to make time for those who write.

Q. You seem to have become far more frank and forthright, far less diplomatic than you used to be.

A. Maybe. I think it comes from the knowledge that what you write or express has the ability to go to the reader without dilution or moderation. The absence of the middleman helps in the purity of my output. I try to be as honest as I can in my outpouring and yes they may seem to be more frank and forthright and less diplomatic.

As I spoke in my last blog of Day 28(i), words and expressions can get twisted and misinterpreted and can cause unwanted hurt or a misunderstanding. A twisted thought could create an avalanche of negativity I would hate that to happen and whenever it has, I have not hesitated to tender an apology or to correct myself if I have done wrong.

Q. Your comments on Shah Rukh's TV show have been discussed widely. Do you feel your comments could've had an impact that perhaps exceeded your intentions?

A. Exactly. I narrated on my blog what transpired during one of my meetings with TV heads, who had come with proposals to me to do a show for them. I asked them some genuine questions on the viability of game shows. They described to me the falling ratings, which included shows done by me and by others as well I merely transferred these talks to my blog purely to seek opinion not glory, and the next thing I read is that it is an attempt on my part to show Shah Rukh in poor light, which was entirely incorrect and a load of rubbish. I have since, on my blog apologised to Shah Rukh and those offended by this wrong assumption.

I will apologise to Shah Rukh a hundred times if there is an iota of doubt in his mind about my conduct and behaviour towards him.

Q. What expansion plans do you have as a blogger?

A. The blog will shortly become a part of the website that is under construction. The website will be more encompassing - my father, mother, Jaya, Abhishek, Aishwarya, Shweta or any other family member or non-member for that matter who wishes to contribute to it, will have a presence. Matter containing my father's works will be prominently displayed. His repertoire is vast and of immense literary value and I wish to give it its pride of place.

Q. It's being said in a section of the press that the blog is a commercial enterprise and that you're being paid a hefty amount to keep it interesting.

A. I repeat here again that the blog is not a commercial venture and I have not been paid this

ridiculous amount of money to write it. I am merely using the facility of the server provided by bigadda.com to carry my blog.

*Subhash K. Jha* ( © IANS / India eNews)