

## **Karim Baksh**

Died 8<sup>th</sup> of July 2000

### **Obituary**

He was unfortunate to have become a victim of our Karachi's bloody roads and systems. He was not even mentioned on the daily statistics of the newsroom city pages. He was not even a digit. Perhaps because he was one of the greatest of our anonymous heroes who die everyday in the urban jungle that is Karachi and deserve a better obituary.

A lean man in his late fifties worked as an office boy (man) in a local design office. An assistant who could perform almost any task you had in mind. He was found in the Edhi's Sard Khana at Sohrab Goth, Karachi, the cold storage of the unclaimed dead bodies. A much common mystery that we are all used to now because of our inept systems was attached to his dead body. The report slips claim that he was found almost dead on a road in Korangi area, perhaps from a road accident. He was taken to Jinnah Hospital for treatment where he died and because there was no identification on the body, it was sent to the cold store for further investigation and search of his relatives.

Obviously, it sounds like a regular story and the mystery does not deepen at all but whoever knew KB was fully aware that he was perhaps more organized than any MBA graduates around. He carried an office card, a copy of NIC and a complete list of important contact telephone numbers with him all the time. He carried enough cash with him should anybody need help. Besides the office keys he carried a bunch of keys with him as he was asked for general help on the weekends in almost a dozen homes. All the housewives and all the husbands wanted him desperately and made advance bookings for the weekend help. How could he have no identification on this body?

Was he victim of a crime incident whereby his belongings were snatched and later the body was thrown on the road? Did he bleed to death on the road after an accident as no one takes the risk of helping a dying man on the road for fear of police involvement? Was his identification and belongings removed from his body by someone at the police station or the hospital or in transit? Could he be alive today if proper aid reached him in time? These questions will remain unanswered because of our inept systems. A large number of ordinary looking people die in mysterious circumstances everyday and that's that.

I knew KB personally and I am proud. The integrity of any human being can be checked and endorsed on several human weakness tests and the biggest test of all relates to wealth/money. KB had borrowed Fifteen thousand rupees from me for a period of one year, for his son's wedding and I had forgotten to record this transaction. Exactly after one year on the promised date the money was put on my desk with thanks. I refused to accept the money as I could not recall the loan. But KB was careful enough to remember each and every detail as the day, date, time and under which circumstances the money was borrowed, how I had made the payment and what had happened before and after on that day etc. There is a peculiar legend about the loan defaulters in our country on every level but this man stunned me.

The honesty and sincerity was his natural trait. Everyone automatically trusted him on every matter after the first meeting. In fact he became a member of the family for a number of families because of his character. He had an amazing public relation quality

that he could deal with the worst and the best of human kind, the most uneducated and most educated. Everyone sincerely believed that nothing could happen to him.

He had a habit of smiling before saying yes to everyone. He would even help the neighbors for small chores. He would prefer to walk even for long distances to perform even the smallest of odd jobs. His punctuality was remarkable. His time management was better than any management graduate around. If he could not perform a task at one location he would call from there and proceed to another location to complete the task or wait for further instructions. We learnt a lot from him. He did not go to any school. He would require somebody to read his letters that he received from the village.

When he joined work he was told about the cleanliness requirements of the office. During the ten years of service there was no complaining except for minor mishaps. He would organize to wash the office on a free weekend with some help. He was obsessed with work. You did not have to lay down a list to tasks for him, he knew the sequence of tasks and order of work with precise timing, in fact he made suggestions on every level to improve and facilitate the task. One is forced to seriously question if wisdom is acquired through education in an institution or is a god's gift to some human beings.

He maintained his family remotely but quite skillfully. From his meager salary he had his sons and daughters wed quite gracefully, made a house for his wife in the village, had some saving in the fixed deposit for her for the rainy days. He made a small house in Karachi where his sons and daughter in law lived. Though he was not around everyone felt his presence all the time.

He would never leave without informing you except for his last journey. It was perhaps for the first time, in the last ten years or so that I had to open my own office. The office staff members had to wait outside the office as I was late to reach office from some site. Everyone, deep down in the heart knew that something serious had happened, otherwise KB is normally in control, and nothing can possibly go wrong. With so many admirers KB was considered to be with one of the contacts on the weekend but when no one knew the whereabouts of KB everyone was worried.

He was a simple, plain, and an unassuming ordinary man. But he was also a wise, honest and a good human being. I doubt if he ever willfully hurt anybody or even willfully caused a loss to anyone. As I have often repeated to my friends it is not so difficult to become a doctor, a designer or a diplomat but it surely impossible to become a decent human being. He was perhaps one of those unheard good human beings who disappear from the face of the earth without any trace or obituary. All the well known, great and famous people have their place in the obituaries of the newspapers but can we just give a little space to an ordinary little man who was in-fact larger than life in the truest sense.

I know we all have to go one day but Karim Baksh you have gone a bit too early.

Wherever you have traveled to, dear Karim Baksh, we miss you very much.

Danish A Zuby  
16<sup>th</sup> July 2000