



**GOOD MORNING  
SHER/SHERNIYO !**

**GOOD MORNING  
FOODNA HAI HUME JEEVAN MEIN BAHUT  
ISLYE KAAM KARNA HAI  
ACHA KAAM KARNA HAI  
BEHTAREEN KAAM KARNA HAI  
AUR BEHTAREEN JEEVAN KHUD HI BAN JAYEGA**

## **THE FEAR OF RESULTS**

Megha had begun to fear result days in a way she had never feared examinations. Exams, at least, gave her three hours in which effort could still matter; result days gave her only a laptop screen, a PDF loading bar, and those unbearable seconds during which months of discipline stood silently waiting to be judged by numbers. For nearly four years, this ritual had repeated itself with such brutal consistency that even the air in their small rented home in Kanpur seemed to recognize it. Her mother

would wake earlier than usual, boil tea twice because the first cup would go cold untouched, and keep pretending to do ordinary things in the kitchen while listening carefully for the sound of Megha's chair moving near the old dining table where the laptop sat. Outside, vegetable carts would pass through the lane calling out prices, scooters would honk impatiently, schoolchildren with oversized bags would rush by the balcony, and the city would continue behaving as though it were an ordinary morning. But inside that house nothing felt ordinary. Inside that house, a result day felt like judgment arriving quietly in digital form.

Megha was twenty-six, the daughter of a widowed tailor, a postgraduate in economics, and someone who had spent so many years preparing for

government exams that time itself had begun to measure her life differently. Years were no longer remembered through festivals or birthdays or family occasions but through notifications—“the year of that SBI mains,” “the year I missed RRB by two marks,” “the year the mains paper was impossible,” “the year I cleared prelims but couldn’t cross final cut-off.” Her books had multiplied over time: current affairs magazines stacked beside vocabulary notebooks swollen with highlighted words, reasoning workbooks with bent corners, quant registers dense with calculations in blue and black ink, admit cards folded into transparent folders like old passports from journeys that had led nowhere. Even the wall beside her study table carried traces of preparation—calendar pages with dates circled in red, sticky notes with revision plans, cut-offs

written and crossed out, motivational quotes she had once believed and later stopped reading. Yet despite all those visible signs of effort, nothing in the room reflected what preparation had actually done to her from the inside. Nobody could see the fatigue of beginning again after every failure. Nobody could see how hope itself became exhausting when repeatedly rebuilt from ruins.

People in the neighbourhood had once spoken about Megha with admiration. She had always been bright, always among the top students in school, the girl teachers pointed at while speaking to parents about discipline and potential. But success delayed too long begins to alter how the world names you. Admiration becomes encouragement, encouragement becomes concern, concern becomes

advice, and advice eventually becomes silence. Relatives stopped asking her directly about exams because they had learned disappointment makes people avoid eye contact. Instead, they asked her mother casually during weddings while standing near the sweets counter or outside washrooms—“Still preparing?” “Any news?” “Why not teaching job?” “Private school mein try kare?” “Age nikal toh nahi jayegi?” Her mother always answered politely, but Megha noticed how her smile tightened after each conversation. Sometimes pain enters a family through words that aren’t even spoken inside the house. Her mother stitched blouse pieces and fall-pico orders from home using an old black sewing machine placed near the window where the best afternoon light entered. That machine had a rhythm Megha had known since childhood—the

metallic rise and fall of the needle, the sudden pull of thread, the pedal working beneath tired feet—and for years it had become the background music of her preparation. She had studied through that sound in summer heat, in power cuts, through winter fog, through festivals, through illness, through self-doubt. There were afternoons when she solved seating arrangement questions while her mother measured sleeves beside her, evenings when she memorized banking awareness while cloth scraps collected on the floor, nights when the machine continued till midnight because an urgent order had to be delivered next morning. Sometimes Megha wondered whether both of them were doing the same thing in different forms—one stitching cloth, the other stitching hope.

The hardest part was never failure itself. Failure had become familiar enough to survive. The hardest part was the terrifying closeness of almost. Missing a cut-off by 0.75 marks. Reaching interview but not final list. Scoring well overall but low in one section. Watching others move ahead by margins so tiny they felt like mockery. Every scorecard looked like proof that she was near enough to touch success and yet somehow never inside it. She had learned to open result PDFs with controlled breathing because more than once her eyes had played cruel tricks on her. Her roll number would appear for one electric second inside a cluster of digits, her pulse would leap violently, and then the numbers would rearrange themselves into someone else's name, someone else's selection, someone else's life changing while hers remained

exactly where it was. Once in the district library a girl screamed after seeing her name in the result list, and Megha's heart reacted before her mind did. For half a second her body believed the scream belonged to her own success. That evening she cried all the way back in the rickshaw not because she had failed, but because her own hope had embarrassed her.

One rainy July afternoon she returned from the library after another result had not gone her way. Her umbrella had flipped inside out in the wind near Naveen Market, muddy water had stained the edge of her kurta, and her notes were damp at the corners. Her mother was sitting near the window threading a needle into the sewing machine. Without asking anything, she poured tea into a steel cup and placed it beside Megha. For a long time Megha

stared at the steam rising from it before saying in a voice so quiet it nearly disappeared, "Maa... I think my name only exists on admit cards now." Her mother didn't answer immediately. She kept trying to pass the thread through the eye of the needle, failed twice because of weak light, adjusted her glasses, and then looked at her daughter with a calmness Megha would remember forever. "No," she said, "your name exists in this house every time someone calls me your mother." The sentence entered Megha so deeply that she carried it for months like hidden fire.

When the next notification came, Megha changed her preparation without announcing it to anyone. She stopped living result to result. She stopped opening topper strategy videos after midnight. She muted Telegram groups

where people discussed attempts and expected cut-offs obsessively. She stopped comparing scores after mocks. She no longer prepared for prediction. She prepared only for paper. Her days became severe and disciplined in a quieter way. She woke before sunrise and revised vocabulary while the sky outside remained grey-blue. She read editorials with a pencil in hand and underlined unfamiliar phrases. She practiced quant until calculation speed became instinctive. She solved puzzles until the diagrams in her rough notebook looked like abstract art. She revised current affairs while eating lunch and practiced English comprehension late into the evening while her mother stitched beside the window. She gave herself fully to routine—not because she felt confident,

but because routine was the only thing that did not betray her.

Months later the exam came and went. She walked out uncertain but peaceful, which felt unfamiliar. The paper had not been perfect. But it had been honest. She had given it everything she had that day. Then came waiting—the strangest season in an aspirant's life, when nothing is in your control but your mind refuses to accept that. Days stretched. Weeks blurred. Rumours floated online. Expected cut-offs changed every three days. People speculated endlessly. Megha did none of it. On the morning the result was expected, she didn't even open the laptop herself. She sat beside the sewing machine while her mother searched the PDF on the old laptop placed on the dining table. The ceiling fan above them clicked once every rotation. A guava seller called from the

street below. Somewhere pressure  
cookers whistled from nearby kitchens.  
The laptop screen reflected both their  
faces faintly as the PDF loaded.

Her mother scrolled.

Then stopped.

Adjusted her glasses.

Scrolled back up.

Read again.

Megha's throat tightened instantly.

Her mother turned the screen toward  
her without speaking.

There it was.

Her roll number.

Her name.

Printed plainly in black text after years  
of existing only in admit cards and  
imagination.

For several seconds Megha did not react  
because disappointment had trained her  
not to trust happiness immediately. She

read the number once. Then again. Checked category. Checked father's name. Checked every detail with trembling fingers. She touched the screen as if it might vanish if not held in place. Then suddenly something inside her gave way. She began crying with such force that she bent forward over the table while her mother held her shoulders from behind. It was not only joy leaving her body. It was fatigue. Years of waiting. Every missed cut-off. Every ignored comment from relatives. Every bus ride back from the library after bad results. Every false hope. Every result day heartbeat. Every imagined version of this moment. All of it dissolved together.

That night, long after neighbours had come with sweets and calls had slowed and silence returned to the house, Megha opened the transparent folder

where she had kept all her old admit cards. She spread them across the bed one by one—different years, different exam names, different centres, different photographs of herself changing slowly with time while the expression remained almost the same: determined, tired, expectant. She looked at her own name printed at the top of every page and smiled through tears. For years she had searched for that name in result PDFs with desperation sharp enough to wound. Perhaps life had not forgotten her. Perhaps it had simply been waiting until effort and timing arrived at the same door together. And sitting in that quiet room beside old admit cards, stitched cloth, exam notes, and the sleeping sound of her mother breathing from the next room, Megha felt something she had not felt in years—not relief alone, not happiness alone, but

return. As though after wandering through waiting for so long, her own name had finally found its way back to her.

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## Word List

<b>Word</b>	<b>Meaning</b>	<b>Hindi Meaning</b>
Ritual	repeated routine	नियमित क्रिया
Brutal	harsh / severe	कठोर
Suspended	caught between two states	अधर में
Discipline	consistent controlled effort	अनुशासन
Fatigue	deep tiredness	थकान
Admiration	respect / praise	प्रशंसा
Alter	to change gradually	बदलना

<b>Word</b>	<b>Meaning</b>	<b>Hindi Meaning</b>
Margin	a very small difference	मामूली अंतर
Mockery	something cruel or insulting	उपहास
Dissolve	disappear gradually	घुल जाना
Severe	intense and serious	कठोर / गंभीर
Expectant	full of hope and waiting	आशान्वित
Persistence	continued effort despite difficulty	दृढ़ता
Trembling	shaking slightly	कांपना
Relief	freedom from pain or worry	राहत

## **Moral**

Sometimes success does not arrive when we first call for it. It arrives after

teaching us how to survive waiting—  
and then returns our own name to us  
with interest.

