

The Language of Car

By Anil Shrivastava 'Musafir'

Life has never been a smooth ride for me nor did I ever expect it to be that way. I have met obstacles, bumps, jars and jerks along the way but have always been able to steer through them without a shock. I must have bumper to bumper protection from God. Although it may seem that I am in the driver's seat, someone else is providing me the needed traction. I am only a passenger on the road of life, a *musafir* (a traveler in Urdu/Hindi).



I think that like me, everyone else has been helped along the way by many kind and generous people. "I can do it by myself," or "I have made myself," or "I did it my way," is just tooting one's own horn. So many times we tend to run on fumes along the lonely highway of life. That is the sign that our attitude is due for a tune up. We need to make an immediate u-turn and rush to the repair shop.

If we are honest, and humble, we will acknowledge that there have been others in our lives who have helped us keep rolling – be it our parents who maneuvered us out of difficulties in spite of their own rough patches or be it a friend who gave us a push when we could not get out of first gear – there are people who may have courteously yielded to us so that we could compete in the fast lane. I give them my thumbs up!

Shifting gears, let's not forget our mentors; someone who may have advised us to turn up our high beam and, at the same time, pay attention to our interior. Whenever we veered a bit, a mentor advised us to check our rear view mirror so that we could rev up our engine and accelerate before it was too late.

I don't know about you, but I have stalled with my obsession about people who envied me whenever I cruised along smoothly on the highway of my career and life in 'General.' Their muffled praise, jealous exudes of toxic fumes, subliminal expressions and sudden lane changes made me feel that I was riding on flat tires.

The need for speed was enormous. I decided to stay in the race. The only way to do that was to aim for the pole position ignoring the crashed cars and the ones trying to sputter along on an empty tank. Instead of paying attention to the bystanders who wanted me to shift into neutral, I got inspired by those who always showed me the checkered flag, those who wanted to see me in the winner's circle, and those who buffed my exterior to remove the rust.

Vroom vroom and Chitti chitti bang bang! After burning enough rubber and kicking heaps of tires, all I can say is 'life has been one sweet ride.' I am still rolling along. It is not going to be an automatic hit. Thanks to everyone who saved me from being a road-kill!



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