

Awaara Hoon



V. S. Gopalkrishnan

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Editor's Note: This story is slightly adapted, with the author's permission, from the original published on www.sulekha.com

I think I saw the movie *Awara* (1951) at Rajkumari Talkies, Mambalam in Madras (now Chennai). I was nearly ten years old. I fell in love at once with Raj Kapoor, the lead actor, and also the title song *Awara Hoon!* (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B6HTM4SYydY>) However, the lead actress Nargis somehow did not impress me. The romantic hero Raj Kapoor at once became my role model for the most impractical purposes!

In 1952 or so, there where was a Film Stars Cricket Match for charity in Madras. The Madras team was led by my maternal uncle S. Balachander, a film hero, and a maestro in the movie and music worlds at a young age. The Bombay Team, the adversary, was captained by Raj Kapoor.

The match started on time. I had a 'free pass' from my uncle. Raj Kapoor was nowhere on the pitch. The proceedings became desultory for me. I lost interest in the match although leading film stars such as Karan Diwan, Nimmi, and others were running helter skelter to collect the ball. Nearly an hour later appeared our Raj Kapoor and we went wild. Pink and sprightly, with antics of a showman, he was the real king on the field.

My uncle bought a record (78 rpm) of *Awara Hoon* for his radiogram. Then, there was no end to my listening of that song.

Awara Hoon converted me, a Tamil speaker living in Madras, where there was significant antipathy towards Hindi, into a lover of Hindi Film Songs. This love lives in me even today.❖

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