

ges Iqbal's future

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Iqbal Khan has learnt it the hard way that when you are down-but-not-out, you must never open your big mouth. The ex-Balaji soap queen's blue eyed boy first walked out of her show Karam Apna Apna — saying sorry for the time for himself as he was over worked — and then when he landed a plum role in StarOne's next recent show, he was bragging all over town about how he was making a great comeback with "a Miditech show on StarOne." Iqbal was shooting an action-adventure show based on the lives of air force cadets for which he was offered huge money. He had started shooting too.

But the next morning he was written out of the show with no explanation given. News is that Ekta sabotaged Iqbal's comeback. One hears Balaji and Star Plus have a contract which does not allow any ex-Balaji actor to work on a Star Plus show that is produced by another company. The newly married actor sought Madame Kapoor's blessing but she said "I love you Iqbal, but can't break the rule." So apna Iqbal is back in the struggler route. He is still waiting for a role.

Iqbal refused to comment. "I wouldn't like to get into any controversy. I am a firm believer in destiny. My faith in the Almighty is unshakable. I will do my best efforts and leave everything to God," he said. He refused to say anything on the show or the kind of money he was offered. He also refused to say if he will make his comeback on TV with the same production house. "I really don't know... but I am going to return very soon," was his vague reply.

When asked if he regrets quitting Karam... and Balaji, he says he has no regrets whatsoever. "I quit the serial because I didn't want to do any kind of work that would harm my image, personality and belief or which would have attracted criticism," he said tersely, sounding obviously hurt about the turn of events. Tell him if he is happy with Karan Ekta said Iqbal was the Shah Rukh Khan of TV, he says, "That's very nice of her and I take it as a big compliment." Iqbal doesn't regret leaving Balaji. "But it will all depend on the kind of serial and the role," he adds.

When asked if the show is very much on and will be aired soon. "Iqbal is doing the show," says Ajay Vidyasagar, Star India's senior vice-president, content. When asked about the contract Star has with Balaji that bars ex-Balaji actors from doing a non-Balaji show for Star Plus, Vidyasagar says, "It's all normal. There is an understanding between Star and Balaji on casting actors but it pertains only to Balaji shows only. No company can interfere with our decisions."