

Dev Anand once told Dilip Kumar out of professional camaraderie, "*Lala, tu sau saal jiye ga.*" (Lala [his father was Lala Ghulam Sarwar], you will live hundred years). He turned 92 on 11 December. Those who lived to see and enjoy the time are blissfully nostalgic and effusive about Dilip Kumar. Muhammad Yusuf Khan, the man behind the screen name Dilip Kumar held his time with great sway.

Satyajit Ray spoke of Dilip Kumar as "the ultimate method actor" as Al Pacino is called. Dilip Kumar left a lofty mark of awesome acting talent during the three decades of his acting career. He influenced the social trends when his films were awaited, adored, loved and absorbed into people's lifestyle. Young men would have his hair style, throw glances like him and pursue their sweethearts with his romantic flair. He was the idol of the time. It was difficult to live without him.

He was a passionate actor and he acted with all the power of his endowment. Shahrukh Khan candidly admitted, "He is a great actor and idiots like me try to copy him". The outstanding feature of his many talents is the emotive content in his acting. It was palpable in his role of Shankar in Amiya Chakravarty's *Daag*. The toy maker Shankar was an incorrigible boozier - a rebel with rage against injustice and inequality of society. Kanhaiya Lal, their neighbour has suddenly become rich and Shankar was in love with his step-sister Nimmi. There was no way he could get her with his bad habit and humble circumstances. So, he was derisive of his mother yelling, "*Maa, tu ye putla se kya mangti hai. Lala Jagat Narayan's se mang*". (Maa, what do you want from this toy; want it from Lala Jagat Narayan). There was such vehemence in his derisive remark! Later when his mother died, he poured out his loss with such genuinely profound emotion exclaiming eleven times the dialogue. "*Meri Maa mar gai*". It was incredible!

There was such intensity in his character portrayals. In *Gunga Jumna* his own production, again it was Kanhaiya Lal (Kallu), the epitome of village tyrant, who drove Gunga (Dilip) to the badlands to become a dacoit. He was in love with the lively village belle Dhanno (Vyajantimala). The life of a dacoit in the badlands being driven from one place to another took the toll. He broke down and crumpled to the ground and holding Dhanno he spoke like a child, "*Mai ghar se beghar ho gaya*" (I have been turned out of my house. I have become a wanderer). Character-



Dilip Kumar

## The Story of Dilip Kumar

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actor Pran who expired few years back once shared his experience of acting with Dilip Kumar. His role was that of Ramesh Thakur. He recalled in a scene Dilip Kumar held him by his midrib. Dilip held the midrib so rightly that he winced with pain, worried that his bones would break! Such was the intensity of Dilip's character portrayal.

Most of the method actors develop a screen persona that distinguishes them. Al Pacino was at his best in this regard in *Scent of a Woman*. He is of medium height yet his screen persona is of commanding height which he emphasised to the fullest in *Scent of a Woman* - particularly when uttering "Whoa" and the exclamation 'super, super, super!' Dilip Kumar's screen persona is of that inimitable category. His flamboyance as swashbuckling Jai in Mehboob Khan's colourful extravaganza *Aan* was a magnificent display of his screen persona.



Dilip as Jai Tilak in his dashing outfit, a beaming face with his hands on the hip and legs astride was a striking sight. He was in his elemental charm. Jai Tilak's indomitable pursuit of the haughty princess Raj (Nadira) was the scintillating part of the movie. *Aan* was released in Dacca at the then Manashi movie theatre with great fanfare. An elephant was used for publicity.

Mehboob Khan's *Andaz* was a watershed in Indian movie. It ushered in a modernist trend. Dilip Kumar's Dilip was the look of that modernity. Nargis and Raj Kapoor were with him in a love triangle story. Young at age only 26, looking refreshingly romantic, eyes eager for love and in a befitting tuxedo Dilip's screen persona was something that Indian movie



goers had not seen before. Added to this was a piano with Dilip strumming on the keys singing "*Tu kahe agar*" and "*Jhoom jhoom ke nacho gao khushi ki geet*". For many film goers it was to last for a life time.

Many hearts would flutter for love dwelling on the romantic gaze of Dilip Kumar. And there was melancholia in his looks for discerning eyes. Romantic look and melancholia made Bimal Roy's *Madhumati* memorable. Vyajantimala was in the female lead role. Dilip as Anand was in love with the village belle Madhumati and was wandering in the woods singing "*Dil tarap tarap ke kahe raha hai abhi ja*" gazing up to into the tree tops. He looked so impeccably the lover boy. This is perhaps the mark of a Dilip movie. When adversity came he wandered around singing "*Toote hue khabon ne hamko ye shikhaya hai*". Madhumati was a rare combination of Bimal Roy, Dilip Kumar, Vyajantimala and Salil Chowdhury.

Melancholia was Dilip Kumar's forte. He was the "Tragedy King" of the Indian cinema. In the beginning of his film career he kept on giving his best in tragedy films -the dejected lover losing the lady he loved. So, when Bimal Roy made *Devdas*, Dilip Kumar was the obvious choice. If Hamlet would have been made in his time, who else would have been the choice - indeed Dilip Kumar. *Mughal-e-Azam* has Dilip in it but the grandeur of the cinematic extravaganza is more important.

When opportunities came Dilip Kumar proved with superb performance that he was equally versed in comic roles. *Azad* was a classic comedy of the time. Last but not the least is his critically acclaimed performance in Tapan Sinha's *Sagina*. Shakti left no doubt about the mark he left on his time. Dilip Kumar will be remembered at all times because there