

Centenary Tribute: Dev Anand

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A Journey of 'The Guide'



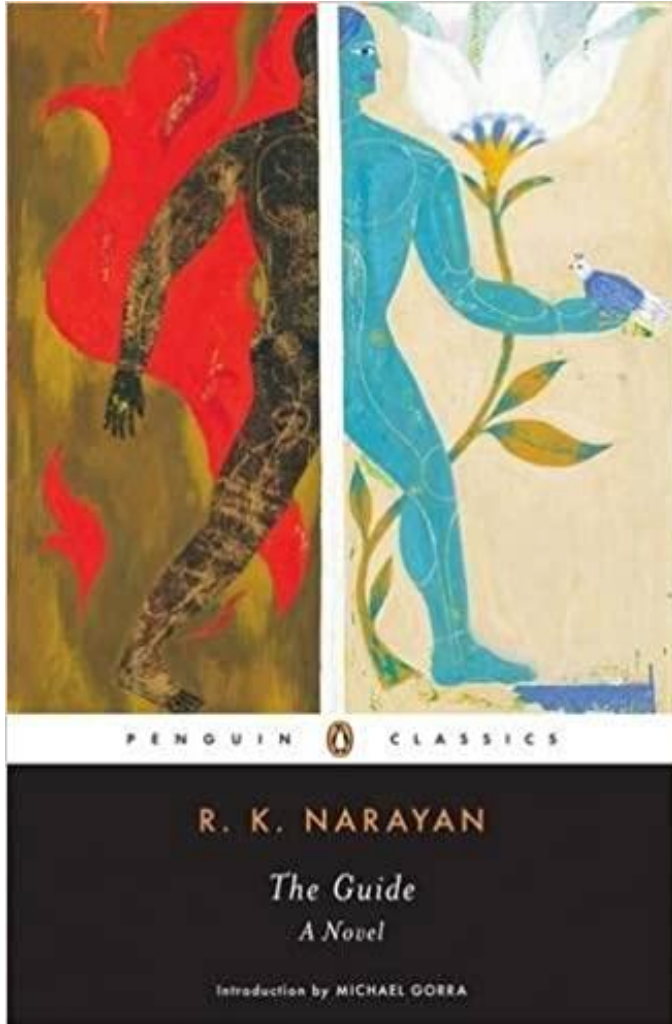
3rd December 2011, the day that saw the Legend of Dev Anand leaving the stardom and millions of fans behind! Dev Saab (As I prefer to address him) left on his journey to the next world to entertain and create new fans! The first impressions that he cast on the silver screen for his fans in 1946 with Prabhat Film Company's *Hum Ek Hein* (Director P. L. Santoshi) never faded; instead, it became more robust, more profound and bolder! In quick succession post-independence in 1949, he established his banner 'Navketan' and continued creating his dream world until his last breath!

Dev Saab's fans may debate about his best work as he was a writer, director, producer, and, of course, an actor; hence, the possibilities and probabilities go on for deciding which title may suit to describe the heartthrob of millions. The magic he created with his hairstyle, broken teeth and sparkling smile can be witnessed in all his films, and the debate continues. However, when we say 'Navketan' and

'Dev Anand' together, there is one film that floats as effortlessly as Deb Saab's English pronunciation: *Guide*! Dev Saab himself became a guide for many struggling aspirants, bringing them to this uncertain world of cinema and showing them a path to lead. As a producer, he stood behind his directors and crew members and created many landmark pictures, *Guide* (1965) being one of them.

The story of '*Guide*' is no less than an exciting and entertaining journey through the wonderlands. There are many interesting characters like R. K. Narayanan, Vijay Anand, Chetan Anand, Raj Khosla, Waheeda Rehman and Satyajit Ray, in a guest appearance!!! Dev Saab bought the rights for 'The Guide' from R. K. Narayan. Nevertheless, Narayan always remained unhappy with the finished product. The fact that the Hindi *Guide* won the Best Story award at the Filmfare Awards never changed Narayan's opinion about the film. Despite this, all the adaptations of 'The Guide' had one thing in common.

In every adaptation, the story focused on ‘Raju Guide’. In fact, for all the adaptations, the title remained unaltered, too. The novel ‘The Guide’ was published in 1958. The films (both in English and Hindi languages) were released in 1965, and ‘The Guide’ was transformed into a play and was performed on Broadway in 1968.



On the occasion of Dev Saab’s Birth Centenary year beginning on 26th September 1923, here is the first tribute through the story of the journey of ‘The Guide’, among many others, from a film student!

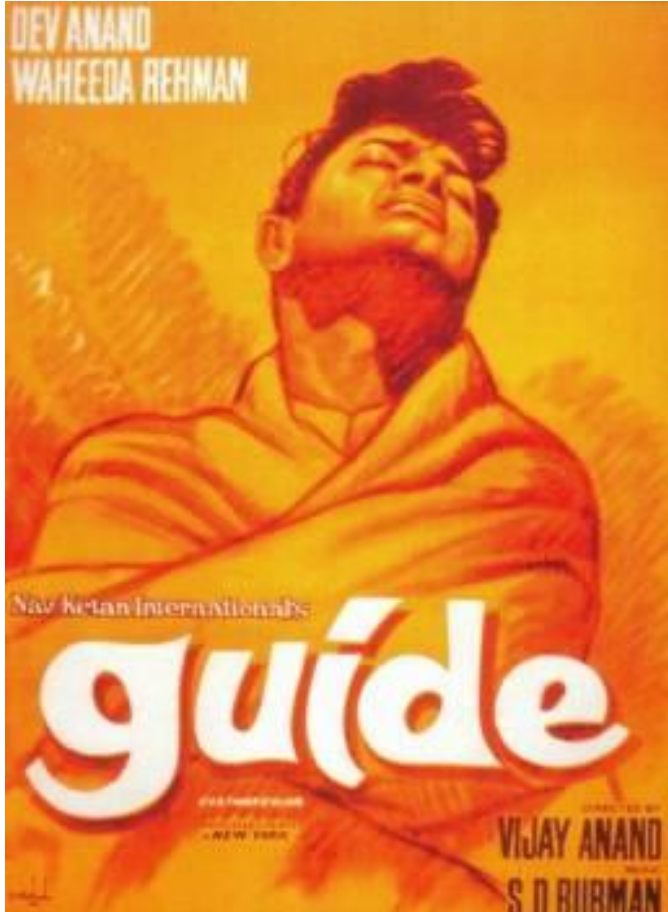
The year was 1961; Waheeda Rehman was getting ready to head off to Mumbai after wrapping up the shoot of Satyajit Ray’s *Abhijan* (1962). Satyajit Ray gifted Waheeda Rehman a novel before telling her, ‘I would like to make a film on this novel. The female protagonist in this novel is a classical dancer who hails from South India. I think you would be a perfect fit for this role.’ Waheeda Rehman accepted the novel as her ‘gift’. That gift was an English novel by R. K. Narayan titled ‘The Guide’. A

couple of years passed by after this incident. Coincidentally, Dev Saab approached Waheeda Ji a little later to discuss a film. He told her, ‘I am producing ‘Guide’. It is my wish that you play the female lead ‘Rosie’. Waheeda Ji asked, ‘Wasn’t Satyajit Ray supposed to make this film? What about that?’ Dev Saab replied, ‘I have already bought the rights for the film. I am going to produce this film in both Hindi and English.’ Reminiscing about these memories, Waheeda Ji always proudly states, ‘The thing that was ‘very much final’ in all these developments was that I was the only choice thought of to play ‘Rosie’, regardless of whoever would make the film.’ Here, Dev Saab’s willingness and passion towards the subject could be seen, but his drive to go international is underlined by the decision to make it in Hindi and English.

When one thinks about this incident as a cinephile, there’s always the thought of how ‘The Guide’ would have taken shape under the hands of a maestro like Satyajit Ray. How different would it be from Dev Saab’s vision of ‘The Guide’? But our mind quickly gets back to another thought- If Satyajit Ray had made ‘Guide’, we wouldn’t have been able to experience the unique kind of magic that Dev Saab’s ‘Guide’ possessed under the direction of Vijay Anand (Goldie Saab). In conclusion, we may say that the Indian audience was lucky enough to witness at least a single ‘Guide’ because ‘Guide’ truly changed the course of Indian Cinema as we all know it now.

The journey of this *Guide*, or the story of the ‘making’ of *Guide* itself, is no less than an exciting film with an engaging plot. *Guide* garnered national and international acclaim after facing many hardships and drawbacks. R. K. Narayan’s novel ‘The Guide’ won the ‘Best Literature’ award at the Sahitya Academy Awards in 1958. ‘The Guide’ was another gem in the already ‘acclaim-studded’ crown jewel worn by R.K. Narayan. On the other hand, the Hindi film *Guide*, released after seven years in 1965, faced severe backlash from the Censor Board of India. This was because the film's plot was about extramarital affairs and adultery. According to the Censor Board, these themes would render a false notion regarding marriages and relationships in the minds of Indian audiences. Fortunately, due to Dev Saab’s request,

Mrs. Indira Gandhi, the then ‘Information and Broadcasting Minister’, interfered and cleared the way for *Guide*’s nationwide release. (This *Guide* was to become India’s official entry to Academy Awards in future.)



The storyline of ‘The Guide’ is woven around three main characters, Raju, Rosie and Marco. According to the novel, Raju hails from the small town of ‘Malgudi’, which was actually R.K. Narayan’s favourite place, though fictional. Raju meets the couple, Rosie and Marco, in Malgudi. Marco is an archaeologist who has arrived in Malgudi to research some archaeological sites close to the town, and Rosie is a kind of homemaker who is the daughter of a courtesan. Rosie has married Marco out of helplessness and not by choice. Raju and Rosie meet and instantly fall for each other. Raju supports Rosie in every situation and always cares for her. When Marco finds out about Raju and Rosie’s increasing intimacy, he exiles Raju from the archaeological sites and Rosie’s life.

After a few days, Rosie arrives at Raju’s doorstep. She tells Raju that she has left Marco for him. Raju welcomes Rosie into his life. Raju knows about the love that Rosie has for classical dance. Raju

decides to work as Rosie’s manager, and in a short period, Rosie gains fame as a revered classical dancer. Gradually, Raju’s obsession with money, fame and extensive public relations increases, and so does Rosie’s passion for her art form. Then, one day, Raju receives a book titled ‘The Magnificent Cultural History of Southern India’ by Marco. Marco sends this book, especially to Rosie. Upon seeing this, Raju realises there might still be a chance he could lose Rosie to Marco. Raju forges Rosie’s signature in a bank-related jewellery affair and gets caught for the same. He thinks Rosie would understand why he did all this, unlike all the other people. But it’s too late till then. Later, Raju is released from jail. He decides he will never return to Malgudi and reaches a village named ‘Mangal’ during his travels. In ‘Mangal’, the villagers hailed Raju as a ‘saint’ due to a misunderstanding. These misunderstandings keep on piling up. Eventually, the villagers believed that if ‘Raju Swami’ went on fasting, the village would be blessed by rains, which would wipe the famines once and for all. Raju confesses all his wrongdoings to his disciple, ‘Velan’. Velan, who thinks of Raju as a ‘holy saint’, compares Raju’s story to ‘Sage Valmiki’. He convinces Raju that the village would surely experience rain if only Raju went fasting. Raju dies of starvation at the end. Raju’s last words before dying are, ‘I can feel the rain on a mountain far from here. I can feel the water touching my toes.’ The question remains if it rained or not.

Dev Saab chanced upon the idea of making a film on ‘The Guide’ in 1962, 4 years after it was published. He was ready to go to London after wrapping up the screening of *Hum Dono* (1961) at the 12th Berlin International Film Festival. Dev Saab met the renowned American author Pearl Buck. Anand and Buck decided to make a film based on a good novel. It was decided that Buck’s friend, ‘Tad Danielewski’ would direct the film. The search for a good story commenced. Dev Saab wished to gain acclaim on an international level after the success of *Hum Dono*. His wish was nearing tangibility after he met with Pearl Buck. Pearl Buck was a ‘Nobel-winning revered author who wrote only a single screenplay for English ‘Guide’ in her lifetime. Dev Saab found this ‘award-winning’ Indian novel in a

London bookstore. He immediately got hold of it and read it in no time. Next, he contacted Pearl Buck and told her about the novel. Pearl Buck liked the story and agreed to make a film along with Dev Saab in both Hindi and English.

When a reader reads any particular type of literature--novel/book, he paints a picture of the story's visual elements in his head. The reader is free to paint that picture in his head according to their will. This is not the case with films, which may be an essential difference between these two art forms. When Dev Saab, a talented actor and a successful producer, must have read this story, he must have imagined himself in the titular role, and he also might have had various thoughts regarding the production of this film.

As the story of *Guide* was taking shape from the novel to the big screen, a few significant changes were bound to happen. Dev Saab must have imagined himself in a 'mund' (traditional South Indian wrap-around for men) and a white shirt. He may have had imaginary reactions from his fans on that attire. 'Will this attire suit me, or will I suit this attire?' may have crossed his mind. Secondly, he may have thought that if this film were set in Southern India, it wouldn't appeal much to the Northern Indian audience. As a producer from Mumbai producing films in the Hindi language, it was possible that he must have had these thoughts. Because of these two essential things, Dev Saab took 'Raju' from Malgudi on a tour and placed him in a tourist destination in 'Rajasthan'.

Ambitious Dev Saab's production for 'Guide' in both English and Hindi started simultaneously, and the commencement met with a dispute between Tad Danielewski and Chetan Anand on the very first day of shooting. It is said that they were arguing over the position of the camera. Dev Saab realised simultaneously shooting these 'two' Guides would be difficult. There was a chance that the production might get shut down if these constant quarrels prevailed. He decided to shelve the 'Hindi' *Guide* and produce the 'English' *Guide* first. In the meantime, Chetan Anand was given a green signal by the Ministry of Defence and the Indian Government for his epic war movie, which was his most ambitious project yet. Thus, Chetan Anand respectfully

withdrew himself from directing the Hindi version of *Guide*. (Chetan Anand's ambitious war movie was *Haqueeqat*, 1964.) Dev Saab turned to another filmmaker working with Navketan Films, Raj Khosla. He was familiar with Dev Saab and had worked with 'Navketan Films on many previous projects. But Waheeda Rehman, at this juncture, came out with her disinterest in Hindi 'Guide' as she wasn't comfortable working with Raj Khosla because of some prior unhappy incident between the two. Dev Saab felt helpless. His last ace card was his younger brother, Vijay Anand 'Goldie'. (Because of his golden hair as a kid, Dev Saab fondly named him 'Goldie') He agreed but put forth an important condition. He told Dev Saab that he would direct Hindi *Guide* only if he were given the creative freedom to write his 'own' screenplay for the story, and hence, it wouldn't be 'Pearl Buck's- Guide', but in fact, 'Vijay Anand's- Guide'. Dev Saab accepted this condition. Goldie Saab wrote his 'own' screenplay for *Guide* in 15 days! The finished screenplay included both dialogue and songs. The script mentioned the placement of songs and thus was a 'complete' one. The production immediately started. Finally, 'Vijay Anand' was the one who was going to direct the Hindi *Guide* and make Dev Saab's dream come true!

An interesting thing worth mentioning regarding the pre-production process of *Guide* was that Dev Saab had initially (during the simultaneous double version shoot) approached Goldie Saab for helming the film. Goldie declined the offer and stated, 'All I have to do is shoot the same shot in 'Hindi' which has already been shot in 'English'. Any layman could do this mechanical work. Why should I do this?' Chetan Anand was offered to direct after this incident. But now, in the complicated situation, we can say that it had been Goldie Saab's destiny to run Hindi 'Guide'. Little did anyone know that 'Guide' was the film that would garner more international acclaim, both for Dev Saab and for Navketan Films.

'The Guide' journey has ups and downs, with halts and stations at different junctures. Though Dev Saab bought the rights for 'The Guide', he was not the only one to transform the novel into a different medium. However, interestingly, all the adaptations

of 'The Guide' had one thing in common. The story's central focus in every adaptation was always 'The Guide'. In fact, for all the adaptations, the title remained unchanged, too. (The noun 'Guide' is neither masculine nor feminine. It can be used as it is for hinting at both genders in the English language; thus, the title 'Guide' remained the same for all three formats.) The novel was published in 1958. The films (both in English and Hindi languages) were released in 1965, and 'The Guide' was transformed into a play and was performed on Broadway in 1968. These three different mediums possess some similarities as well as some differences. It is exciting to look at them, too. As a complete project, 'Guide' was helmed by three directors. Tad Danielewski directed the English film 'Guide', Vijay Anand directed the Hindi film 'Guide' and George Sherman directed the English play 'Guide', performed on Broadway. As a result, 'Guide' was primarily made in two distinct mediums—film and play. So, these two mediums starred two different 'Raju(s)', one played by Dev Saab for the film and one played by 'Zia Mohiuddin' for the play.



The film starred Waheeda Rehman as 'Rosie'; however, the play had Madhur Jaffrey playing the same role as 'Devi'. Actor Zia Mohiuddin was from Pakistan, and Madhur Jaffrey was an Indian. They both were students of the 'Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts' and portrayed the lead roles in the play 'Guide' on Broadway. (Actor Zia Mohiuddin is known for portraying the Arabian guide 'Tafas' in *Lawrence of Arabia* (1962), and Madhur Jaffrey played an important role in bringing 'Ismail Merchant' and 'James Ivory' together, which led to

the creation of 'Merchant-Ivory Productions'—a film company which produced a bouquet of fantastic films.)

Dev Saab was ready to back Goldie Saab's vision and version of 'The Guide'. He was known to be a very supportive and visionary producer who stood behind his younger brother. Goldie Saab made plenty of changes in 'his' version of 'The Guide'. But the most prominent change was the inclusion of melodic songs, followed by the Navketan tradition! The relationship between Hindi Cinema and Songs is similar to that between Indian cuisine and spices. Songs are almost an essential element in Hindi Cinema. And 'Guide' absolutely 'celebrates' the spell of songs in its cinema scope! At the time of Guide's filming, renowned music director S.D. Burman was ill and hospitalised. He had frankly told Dev Saab to go ahead with another music director. But both the Anand brothers were more than firm in their decision to have S.D. Burman as the film's music director. Hence, Dada (S.D.) Burman submitted the first song for shooting while he was in the hospital. Dev Saab didn't like the song, but it was shot upon Goldie Saab's and Waheeda Ji's insistence. That song, which started from the line- 'काटोसे खींचके ये आँचल' proved to be a legendary composition. Dev Saab had a fantastic ear and understanding of songs. Navketan Films' songs and also Dev Saab's other films' songs could be identified quickly in any lot. He also has a good knowledge of poetry and Shayari. He was a well-read, well-heard actor and producer who could leave his impression on the film. This song became an exception, but he agreed to the suggestions and continued shooting. 'Guide's' album is now considered one of the most influential music albums in the history of Indian Cinema. 'Guide's' album consists of various intricately composed songs. 'Saiyaan Beimaan' and 'Kya se kya ho gaya' are complex compositions, with the melody and rhythm changing after almost every stanza. The songs in *Guide* aren't just randomly placed. Instead, they are used as a tool for pushing the storyline forward. Songs like 'Din Dhal Jaaye', 'Tere Mere Sapne Ab Ek Rang Hai', 'Allah Megh De', and 'He Ram Hamare Ramchandra' contain distinct stories and can be studied individually. Similarly, the song 'Piya

Tose Naina Laage Re’ plays a vital role in establishing the current relationship and increasing intimacy between Raju and Rosie. The song conveys accurate information and doesn’t prolong itself too much. When the song is over, we notice Raju and Rosie are both grown and matured as people in their respective lives. ‘Gaata Rahe Mera Dil’ is the only song Goldie saab accepted in the film to honour elder brother Dev Saab’s word to Kishore Kumar. (It is said that on his return from foreign, Kishor Kumar complained to Dev Saab about his non-presence in *Guide*. This film was significant to Dev Saab not only because of his dream project but also because it was an English and Hindi film, plus it was the first fully colour film of Navketan. Dev Saab realised his happy and joyous on-screen voice Kishor Kumar’s friendly crib and requested Goldie to include ‘Gata Rahe Mera Dil’. Goldie Saab also agreed, which was rare as he was always cautious and particular about his choice and placement of songs. We would never see any random song placed just for a ‘dream sequence’ in any Goldie Saab film. (Enthusiasts may please read my PhD thesis available on Shodhganga.)

While discussing songs, examining the scenes preceding the song ‘Wahan Kaun Hai Tera’ is essential. This example is enough to see the Director / Producer combo in sync. Goldie Saab possesses tremendous control over the material and never once lets anything go out of control. No camera movement is superficial. No composition is uncalled for! Each frame is set with meticulous detail. If we review the film's first scene, we see the jailor and a person, probably a convict whose sentence has been completed, exit from the jail. The camera follows the two people while going and thus exits the prison after them. Here, the camera, the ‘audience’, exits along with Raju and the jailor. Hence, Goldie Saab places the audience along with the characters from the first scene, the first frame itself. The jailor wishes Raju, “Congratulations on your release, Mr. Raju. Have a good life ahead!” “Thank you, Jailor Saab”, he replies. This scene is relatively ordinary, but Goldie Saab adds so much depth to it. Dev Saab answers without hesitation. Confident Raju is presented to the audience because his dilemma is yet to come. The audience can understand a few essential things about

Raju’s character in such a short time. The fact that the jailor himself escorts Raju out of the jail and that he calls Raju ‘Mr.’ makes us wonder if Raju might be a famous/respected person. Moreover, Raju is wearing a coat and is carrying a fine-looking suitcase. The costumes and the properties also help the audience make more assumptions about the character. Dev Saab brings this property as it belongs to him; he is already Raju, *The Guide*. Also, how many films do we see the camera exiting the jail and the character? The usual trope is that the camera is placed in front of the jail entrance, and we know a character exits the prison from a distance. In this case, Goldie Saab puts us right beside the character from the start, and thus, we exit the jail after Raju, implying him as ‘The Guide’ from the very first scene. And from then onwards, we begin following Raju. Raju doesn’t know where he wants to go; his dilemma comes with many questions. The thing which he knows for sure is that he is against returning to his native village. So, he starts walking towards a village named ‘Anjanpur’. Here, the town's name indicates ‘Anjan’, meaning ‘Unknown’, which suggests Raju’s journey to an unknown place. As he commences his journey, Raju’s inner voice asks himself, ‘Wahan Kaun Hai Tera, Musafir Jayega Kahan’ (Where are you going, O traveller? There’s no one waiting for you!) This song is even more impactful, all thanks to Dada Burman’s heavy, sad voice and Shailendra’s interesting verses, which put a ‘Guide’ and a ‘Nomad’ in front of each other. Another speciality of ‘Guide’ is that the word ‘guide’ or words/verses relating to the same term are present in every song. Therefore, each piece hints at Raju being the ‘Guide’. (Lyricist Shailendra should be applauded for this, along with Goldie Saab, whose extensive understanding of the source material can be noticed and his earnest involvement in the process.) While the crying scene was shot, Dev Saab felt he didn't look good. This song could be an exception as I see it. His past unfolds in front of the audience, and his clean-shaven, charming persona slowly goes into turbulence till the villagers find him.

At this point, Raju isn’t a ‘Guide’ anymore. He is a nomad, a traveller who has no destination. He travels a lot. While travelling, he works and earns a

bit of money for himself. But his journey keeps on progressing. Just as this song is about to get over, a shadow falls on Raju's face, and then the music stops. Where Raju has arrived now is an old temple with a sculpture on its walls. That sculpture can be described as the epitome of Goldie's genius as a filmmaker. The sculpture is simple- while on his knees, a devotee is worshipping his God! The identity of God isn't directly specified. But as far as I am concerned, that devotee is 'Bhagirath', who is worshipping 'Lord Shiva', persuading him to help 'Gangavataran' on earth.

Just like the devotee in the sculpture, 'Bhola' has also appeared in front of Raju. It is his shadow on



Raju's face. Here, in the composition, we can see a 'Kumkum-laid' rock in the background. (Kumkum-laid

rock generally indicates a form of God in India.)

Goldie Saab tells the audience about Raju's future in



that village right from his arrival. Bhola approaches Raju and calls him 'Swami' and tactfully tries to convince Raju right then and there that his appearance would

bring prosperity to the village. Once, in class, when we were having an intense discussion on 'Guide', one of my Russian students, Rabia, asked me, "Who is helping whom exactly in this situation?" At that time, I had to explain everything to her, from the meaning of the noun 'Bhola' and his character's needs in the film. But, in a way, this was an important question. On the surface, it seems like Bhola is asking for help from Raju, but we later realise that Bhola has helped Raju subtly. After all, Raju decides to stay in the 'Rampuri' village mainly because of Bhola. Now, the name 'Bhola' and his overall character are significant and integral to the story of *Guide*. As a result, the casting of Bhola's character was also a considerable

affair. In the original novel, the nature of Bhola is named 'Velan'. (Velan means Murugan—the son of Lord Shiva.) In the English version 'Guide', the character's name is Velan. The same is the case with the play. But in the Hindi version, Goldie Saab has given him a unique characteristic by naming the character Bhola. Moreover, a hint of sensitivity can be witnessed only on Bhola's face, not Velan's. And the actor playing Bhola completely embodies the character and the innocence that comes with



it. In the English 'Guide' version, K.N. Singh (famous for his negative feelings) portrayed the role of 'Velan'. He had his distinct style regarding using his 'eyes' while acting. It was the same case with 'Michael Carmoyan' who played 'Velan' in the play on Broadway. In the Hindi version, revered character actor 'Gajanan Jagirdar' was cast as 'Bhola'. He perfectly captured the essence of Bhola with his effortless performance. We can see how Goldie Saab paid attention to every department, including casting. After this first scene, Dev Saab and Jagirdar Saab have become one, two bodies and one soul. The total surrenderance shown by Jagirdar Saab through his body and voice and reciprocated with a quick street innovative solution given by Dev Saab (adding his charm, of course!) The overall casting of both versions of *Guide* is worth a study. We may observe that Gajanan Jagirdar was not a regular artist of Navketan, but he was cast as required for that role.



The screenplay written by Goldie Saab is multidimensional, and it is supported very well by Dev Saab as a producer and with his performance as an actor. It has various layers and thus delivers at many levels. The original story, too, has a lot of

depth. When a filmmaker makes a film based on/adapted from a novel or a book, it becomes the filmmaker's work of art. 'He/She' is the captain of that particular ship. They shape the 'creation' according to their will. The task is mammoth. It is like trying to fit the ocean in a small bottle. But, the filmmaker completes that task and often ends it with sheer excellence. The Hindi version of 'The Guide' is Navketan production, and one can see the legacy being carried on with *Guide*. There were instances where the younger and elder brothers had creative differences, but eventually, they found a way forward for the project. Goldie Saab had worked alongside famous actors, like his elder brother Dev Saab, but never once compromised his decisions in their favour. For the climax of *Guide*, such a situation had arisen. The 'Evergreen young handsome superstar' inside Dev Saab was not ready to look ugly or famished and may have advised against growing a beard for the climax. The reason is not to disappoint his 'fans'. But Goldie Saab convinced him using all his methods. Dev Saab knew 'Goldie' had the last word on the set as a director. Dev Saab admired his work and always spoke about his craftsmanship and understanding of cinema. Dev Saab agreed and went ahead with the climax as written and directed by his younger brother. The combo of Dev Saab and Goldie

Saab was able to shape 'Guide' as they wanted to, and it perfectly turned out into a 'masterpiece' that we all admire today.

Though R.K. Narayan was unhappy with the film *Guide* (1965), it didn't stop the Anand brothers from making it and the audience and cinephiles from appreciating it. *Guide* bagged seven Filmfare Awards and a National Award for that year—unfortunately, S.D. Burman didn't win at the Filmfare for 'Best Music Director'. Hindi *Guide* (1965) was India's official entry to the Oscars that year. In 2008, the Hindi version of *Guide* was screened at the Cannes International Film Festival in the presence of Dev Saab. This must have been a meaningful and memorable experience for Dev Saab.

In the Hindi version 'Guide', Marco and Raju are in a cave when Marco says, "Do you know why any other archaeologist didn't find this place before me? Because it was written in my 'destiny' that only I shall find this place!" Parallel to this, it can be said that producing and directing 'Guide' was written in Anand Brother's 'Destiny'. After all these years, 'Guide' is loved by everyone and remains one of the greatest and most influential films of the Indian Film Industry. In Dev Saab's professional career, *Guide* holds a more prominent position, considering both a producer and an actor!

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