

#OLIVE TREES

Timeless Giants

The World's Oldest Olive Trees!



live trees are renowned for their longevity and resilience, often living for several centuries and even millennia. Among these ancient trees, the title of the oldest olive tree in the world is a subject of fascination and mystery. Various olive trees across the Mediterranean region claim to be the oldest, with some dating back thousands of years, making them living witnesses to human history and culture.

What Makes Olive Trees Special?

Olive trees (*Olea europaea*) are hardy and adaptable, able to thrive in poor soil and harsh climatic conditions typical of the Mediterranean basin. Their ability to regenerate from old roots, even after the trunk is damaged or cut down, has helped many of these trees survive for centuries. This unique resilience has made olive trees symbols of peace, wisdom, and endurance in many cultures.

The Contenders for the Oldest Olive Tree

Several olive trees around the Mediterranean claim to be the oldest in the world, but exact dating is challenging due to the difficulty in determining the age of very old trees accurately.

- The Olive Tree of Vouves, Crete, Greece**  
One of the most famous ancient olive trees stands in the village of Vouves on the Greek island of Crete. This tree is estimated to be between 2,000 and 3,000 years old. Still producing olives today, it is a revered natural monument and an important part of local heritage.
- The Olive Tree of Al Walaja, Palestine**  
In the West Bank village of Al Walaja, an olive tree is believed to be around 5,000 years old, which would make it potentially the oldest olive tree in the world. This ancient tree has survived through millennia, witnessing countless historical events and human civilizations.
- The Olive Tree of Spain (Souto de San Xulián, Galicia)**  
Spain also hosts ancient olive trees, with some specimens believed to be over 1,000 years old. These trees contribute to Spain's rich tradition of olive cultivation and olive oil production.

Why Are These Trees Important?

Beyond their age, these ancient olive trees are living symbols of human history, culture, and nature's endurance. Olive trees have sustained civilizations by providing food, oil, and wood, and they feature prominently in religious texts, mythology, and art. The oldest olive trees connect us to our ancestors and remind us of the importance of preserving nature and heritage. Many of these trees are protected by local and international conservation efforts to ensure that they continue to live for generations to come. While it is difficult to declare one olive tree as the definitive oldest, the ancient olive trees of Crete, Palestine, and Spain each tell stories of resilience and continuity. They stand as living monuments to the passage of time, bridging past and present with their deep roots and enduring branches. These venerable trees inspire awe and respect, symbolizing the enduring connection between humans and nature.



"Yeh duniya agar mil bhi jaye to kya hai..."

Guru Dutt, being a Karnataki, was an ardent fan of two Bs, one Bimal Roy and other Bengalis. Incidentally or accidentally, Geeta Roy was then beautiful and a fabulous singer. So, it was inevitable and Guru married Gita in a typical Bengali way. Alas, the ending was similarly very bad. Waheeda and Guru were not involved in a scandalous affair, but there was obvious affection between the two. The kind where people around them could tell that something was brewing, but no one dared ask them anything about it. They cared for each other, but they never declared their love from the rooftops.



t was his eyes, he spoke through, and the cinematography, most of the times, the storyline would elude the spectators as in the case of 'Kaagaz ke phool.' The haunting lyrics from *Pyasa* still echo in the hearts of millions, and

with them, the memory of a cinematic genius, Guru Dutt. As we marked his 100th birth anniversary on July 9, 2025, the world of cinema came together to honour not just a filmmaker, but a visionary who transformed Indian film into an art form of lyrical and emotional resonance.

Born in 1925 in Bangalore (then part of the Madras Presidency), Vasanth Kumar Shivashankar Padukone, who would later become known as Guru Dutt, was much more than a director or actor. He was a poet of the screen, a craftsman who carved cinema with light and shadow, silence and music, longing and despair.

Early Life and Entry into Films

Guru Dutt's journey into cinema was marked by an early exposure to art and performance. After studying at Uday Shankar's dance academy in Almora, he began working in various capacities in the film industry, including choreography, editing, and acting. His early collaborations with Dev Anand and

involvement with the studio Navketan Films led to his directorial debut in *Baazi* (1951).

Even in these early years, his style began to show: moody lighting, introspective characters, and a strong integration of music and narrative, a template that would evolve into his signature style.

Pyasa (1957): The Voice of the Rejected

Guru Dutt's 1957 classic *Pyasa* remains one of the most powerful commentaries on the disillusionment of artists in a materialistic world. He played the role of Vijay, a struggling poet whose verses are scorned until he is presumed dead. The film's soul-stirring songs, written by Sahir Ludhianvi and sung by Mohammed Rafi, like 'Yeh Duniya

Agar Mil Bhi Jaye To Kya Hai,' struck a chord with anyone who felt alienated by society's hollow values.

*Pyasa* was not just a film; it was a philosophical statement, a fusion of narrative, visual poetry, and music, that spoke of loneliness, rejection, and a yearning for truth in a world ruled by greed and hypocrisy.

Kaagaz Ke Phool (1959): A Masterpiece Ahead of Its Time

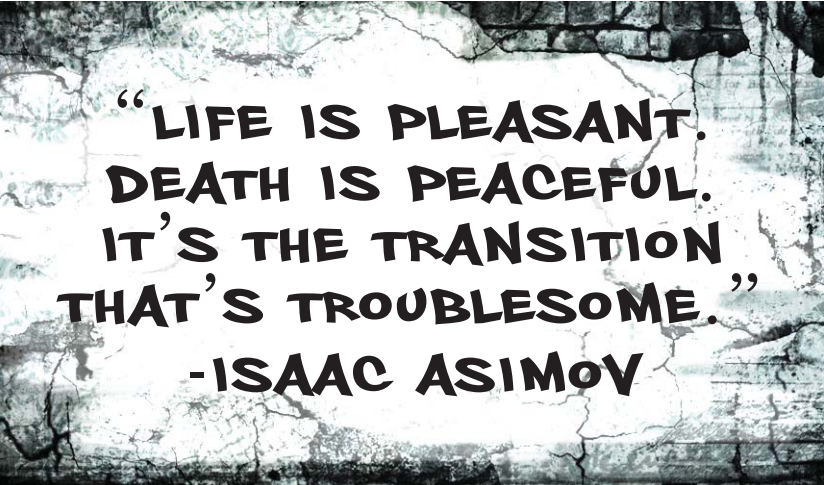
*Kaagaz Ke Phool*, considered India's first film shot in Cinemascope, is often hailed as Guru Dutt's most autobiographical work. It tells the story of a film director whose life collapses under the weight of fame, societal judgment, and lost love. Though it was not commercially successful during its time, today, it is recognized as a cinematic gem, visually stunning

and thematically profound. The iconic scene where Guru Dutt sits in a beam of light as 'Waqt Ne Kiya Kya Haseen Sitam' plays in the background, is now one of the most celebrated images in Indian cinematic history. The film's commercial failure deeply affected him, and he never officially directed another film again, though his creative spirit remained evident in his later works.



Guru and Geeta's wedding.

THE WALL



#GURU DUTT



Waheeda Rehman (left), Guru Dutt (center) and his wife, singer Geeta Dutt (right).



Waheeda Rehman made her debut in Hindi films with Guru Dutt's CID.

Sahib Bibi Aur Ghulam: A Study in Decay and Desire

Though directed by Abrar Alvi, *Sahib Bibi Aur Ghulam* bore the unmistakable imprint of Guru Dutt's vision. The film delved into the crumbling feudal culture of 19th-century Bengal through the lens of unfulfilled desires, gender roles, and societal transformation. Meena

Kumari's portrayal of the tragic Chhoti Bahu is legendary, but it was Guru Dutt's sensitive production and atmospheric framing that elevated the film into a classic. It won the President's Gold Medal for Best Feature Film and was India's official entry to the Oscars that year.

The Auteur and His Art

Guru Dutt was not merely a filmmaker, he was an auteur in the truest sense. His films were not products of formula, but deeply personal expressions of thought, sorrow, and beauty. He was heavily influenced by Bengali literature, European cinema, and the neo-realist movement, yet his storytelling was unmistakably Indian, rich in emotional texture and cultural nuance.

A Life of Inner Turmoil

Guru Dutt, being a Karnataki, was an ardent fan of two Bs, one Bimal Roy and other Bengalis. Incidentally or accidentally, Geeta Roy was then beautiful and a fabulous singer. So, it was inevitable and Guru married Gita in a typical Bengali way. Alas, the ending was similarly very bad.

Waheeda and Guru were not involved in a scandalous affair, but there was obvious affection between the two. The kind where people around them could tell that something was brewing, but no one dared ask them anything about it. They cared for each other, but they never declared their love from the rooftops. He was married, and she was a teenager. In 'Ten Years with Guru Dutt' Abrar



Alvi's Journey' by Sathya Saran. Abrar recalled how Muntaz Begum was worried about the future of their relationship. "Abrar, what will happen to my daughter? I worry about her." Her fears were well-founded. "My daughter is not the type to flit from man to man, and he is a married man," she would say to me. "She tells me that he says he will give up his life for her. She knew I was close to Guru Dutt and probably hoped I would ask him about his intentions," he recalled.

BABY BLUES



By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott

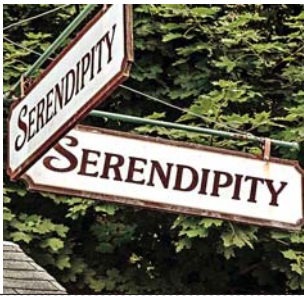
ZITS



By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman

Embracing Life's Happy Accidents

Serendipity Day celebrates the joy of unexpected discoveries and happy accidents that enrich life in surprising ways. Observed annually on August 18, it encourages people to remain open to possibilities rather than rigidly following plans. The term 'serendipity,' coined by Horace Walpole in the 18th century, refers to finding something valuable while not specifically seeking it. On this day, people are reminded that chance encounters, unplanned events, and unforeseen opportunities can lead to meaningful connections, creative ideas, or personal growth. Embracing spontaneity, exploring new paths, and welcoming surprises are central to honouring the spirit of Serendipity Day.



Guru Dutt dropped Waheeda like a hot brick

It was during the shoot of *Sahib Bibi Aur Ghulam* that Guru and Geeta's relationship hit another rough patch as Guru learnt that she might be having an affair. As soon as he suspected Geeta, he 'dropped Waheeda like a hot brick.' 'To let Geeta back into his life, Guru Dutt had dropped Waheeda like a hot brick. He made the sacrifice to assuage his hurt male ego,' Abrar recalled and shared that he asked Guru why he was abandoning Waheeda 'for no real reason.' After they parted ways, Abrar wanted to call Waheeda to the studio one more time, for a final shot in *Sahib Bibi Aur Ghulam* but she just wouldn't agree. "I will not step inside that studio," she declared. He persuaded

and insisted, and she ultimately agreed but put forth a few conditions. "I will not let him touch me. I will not talk, or have any dialogues," she said, as per Abrar. He designed the scene as per her conditions, and she finally arrived.

After *Sahib Bibi Aur Ghulam* wrapped, Guru and Waheeda went on their separate paths. They only met once, at the film's screening at the Berlin Film Festival, a year after its release. After that meeting in 1963, she never saw him again. He passed away in October 1964. His relationship with his wife collapsed, just like it had collapsed before, and he died a broken, lonely man, just like his autobiographical character from *Kaagaz Ke Phool*.

Legacy: A Timeless Influence

Today, Guru Dutt's films are studied in film schools across the world. Directors like Martin Scorsese, Satyajit Ray, Mani Ratnam, and Anurag Kashyap have cited him as a major influence. His blend of poetic narrative, strong female characters, and visual brilliance has made his work timeless.

The BFI (British Film Institute) ranks *Pyasa* and *Kaagaz Ke Phool* among the greatest films ever made. His style is emulated, his music still cherished, and his themes remain deeply relevant, be it the loneliness of the artist, the exploitation of women, or the crumbling of old moral orders. As we commemorate 100 years of Guru Dutt, we are not merely remembering a filmmaker, we are celebrating a philosopher of cinema, a painter of emotion, and a poet of human experience. His films continue to hold a mirror to society, asking the uncomfortable yet necessary questions: 'What is success? What is love? What does it mean to be human in a world that often rewards cruelty over compassion?'

Guru Dutt's last day was October 10, 1964, when he was found dead in his Mumbai apartment at the age of 39. The cause of death was officially ruled as a combination of sleeping pills and alcohol, though whether it was suicide or an

accidental overdose remains a subject of speculation according to some. Guru Dutt had a history of depression and had reportedly attempted suicide before. His personal life was marked by a troubled marriage and career setbacks, which are believed to have contributed to his struggles. His final hours involved a meeting with Dev Anand to discuss a potential film, and a phone call with his estranged wife, Geeta Dutt, about their children. The unfinished film 'Baharen Phir Bhi Aayengi' was later completed by his brother, Atma Ram, and Dharmendra.

His traumatic relationship with his wife Geeta Dutt, and the birth of his daughter, who he was desperate to come back to him, as his wife had deserted him over many real and unhappy issues, was his last conversation. He had rung up Geeta and warned her. He wanted her to bring back their daughter, and had said to her, "Bring her back with you or you'll see my dead face tomorrow." Distraught Geeta had repeated this the next morning upon receiving news of his death. But, Guru Dutt lives on, not only in celluloid but in the hearts of all who yearn for a cinema that speaks to the soul.

rajeshsharma1049@gmail.com



By the end of *Sahib Bibi Aur Ghulam*, Guru Dutt and Waheeda Rehman were not even on talking terms.

#TEMPLE

Shri Narbadeshwar Shiva Temple

A Unique Spiritual Landmark in Lakhimpur Kheri, Uttar Pradesh

The temple embodies a harmonious blend of art, devotion, and history, serving as a living repository of ancient beliefs adapted to local contexts



Nestled in the Lakhimpur Kheri district of Uttar Pradesh, the Shri Narbadeshwar Shiva Temple stands as a singularly unique and culturally significant religious site in India. This temple is renowned for its rare and extraordinary depiction of Lord Shiva seated on the back of a frog, a representation unparalleled anywhere else in the country. Complementing this exceptional iconography is the figure of Nandi Maharaj, the sacred bull who is Lord Shiva's traditional mount, depicted in a rare standing posture, which further distinguishes this temple from others.

The temple traces its origins back to the mid-19th century when it was constructed under the patronage of the Chauhan king of the OEL region between 1860 and 1870. This period of construction links the temple to a significant era in local history, reflecting the devotion, artistry, and cultural values of the time. The Chauhan rulers were known for their contributions to the architecture and religious institutions, and the Shri Narbadeshwar Shiva Temple stands as a lasting testament to their patronage.

What makes the Shri Narbadeshwar Shiva Temple particularly fascinating is its unique spiritual symbolism and artistic expression. Typically, Lord Shiva is portrayed seated on a tiger skin or a bull, but here, the choice of a frog as his seat offers a profound insight



into localized religious traditions and beliefs. Frogs, often symbolizing fertility, transformation, and connection with water bodies, might have held special significance for the community, suggesting a syncretism of nature worship and classical Shaivism.

In addition to Lord Shiva's unusual seat, the presence of Nandi Maharaj in an upright standing posture is rare in itself. Traditionally, Nandi is shown reclining or seated, calmly gazing towards Shiva. The standing form here perhaps symbolizes vigilance, readiness, and a dynamic aspect of devotion, inviting devotees to witness this unique interpretation of a sacred figure.

The temple's location in Lakhimpur Kheri makes it an important spiritual destination for locals and visitors alike. Pilgrims come not only to offer their prayers but also to marvel at the temple's distinct iconography and architecture. Its serene atmosphere and historical significance create a spiritual ambience that continues to inspire faith and reverence among devotees.

Over the decades, Shri Narbadeshwar Shiva Temple has retained its status as a cultural and religious landmark. It highlights the rich diversity of India's religious heritage, demonstrating how regional traditions can create distinctive and meaningful forms of worship. The temple embodies a harmonious blend of art, devotion, and history, serving as a living repository of ancient beliefs adapted to local contexts.

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