

MUKESH

(Compiled and edited by Krishna Murari with input from family and on the internet)



Mukesh Chand Mathur (professionally and popularly known simply as Mukesh) was born in [Delhi](#) in a [Mathur Kayastha](#) family on 22nd July, 1923.^[6] His parents were Zorawar Chand Mathur, an engineer, and Chandrani Mathur and he was the sixth in a family of ten children. The music teacher who used to come home to teach music to Mukesh's sister, Sundar Pyari, found a pupil in Mukesh, who would listen from the adjoining room. After working briefly for the Delhi PWD, he experimented with voice recordings and gradually developed his singing abilities as also his musical instruments skills.^[6]

He had a natural gift of a 'singing' voice, and occasionally used to sing in private and family gatherings. On a family wedding in Delhi in the early 1940s where the late Shri Moti Lal, a common relative and a well known film star of the day also happened to be present, Mukesh rendered a couple of songs. Moti Lal, deeply impressed with the talent of Mukesh, invited him to Mumbai (then Bombay) to join the film industry as a singer. Mukesh agreed and came to Mumbai and Moti Lal had him groomed by noted singer, Pandit Jagannath Prasad. Initially, Mukesh had styled his singing imitating the voice of K.L. Sehgal but later developed his own on the advice of well wishing musical advisers. His voice held a haunting, melancholic quality that could reach into your soul and move you to tears.

To start with, Mukesh tried his hand at acting by his first acting in film [Nirdosh \(1942\)](#). He got his big break as a singer in film [Pahali Nazar \(1945\)](#) – picturised on Motilal - and its song, *dil jalta hai to jalne de* (in Sehgal like voice) became a legendary hit overnight. Later he rendered songs (all in his own style) in [Andaz \(1949\)](#). The film was a hit and so were all of its songs, especially the Mukesh solos, which set the start of Mukesh's career in a big way as a singer in Bollywood. Soon enough, it also created his association with the renowned Raj Kapoor that would last throughout their lives. Starting with [Aag \(1948\)](#) all the way through to [Dharam Karam \(1975\)](#), Mukesh sang for Raj Kapoor and together they produced some of the greatest film songs in Bollywood history, most notably in [Awaara \(1951\)](#), [Shree 420 \(1955\)](#), [Anadi \(1959\)](#), [Sangam \(1964\)](#) and [Mera Naam Joker \(1970\)](#). His songs like 'Aawara hoon' and 'Mera joota hai japani' reverberated not only in the streets of India but also abroad.

Encouraged by his success as a singer, he made a few more attempts to take up acting once again and acted in two films - [Mashooka \(1953\)](#) and [Anuraag \(1956\)](#) which sadly, did not do well. To make matters worse, when he returned to singing he found that offers had dried up, leaving him in financial difficulties.

Fortunately, he was back with a bang in [Yahudi \(1958\)](#), and two other hits from [Madhumati \(1958\)](#) and [Parvarish \(1958\)](#) put him back on top as a singer to be reckoned with. He flourished throughout the 1960s and early 1970s with soulful hit songs, most notably from [Anand \(1971\)](#), [Rainigandha \(1974\)](#), and [Kabhi Kabhie \(1976\)](#). For the song from [Rajni Gandha](#) he received the National Award at the hands of the President of India.



With wife Saral

He won the Filmfare Awards four times for the songs from Anari, Pehchan, Beiman and Kabhi Kabhi. The last one was given to him posthumously and was received by Nitin, his son.

Mukesh had married Saral Trivedi, the 18-year old daughter of a wealthy Gujarati Brahmin Raichand despite reservations from the bride's family since she belonged to a well-off family and Mukesh was still unsettled. Finally, with the help of Moti Lal and R.D. Mathur, the noted Director of film photography, the couple tied the knot on 22nd July, 1946 at a temple and thereafter were received at the residence of R.D. Mathur. The couple managed to pull through the initial ups and downs of married life and came out successfully, living together for thirty long years. They had five children, three girls and two boys. His son, Nitin Mukesh is also a reputed, veteran playback singer and one of his grandsons, Neil Nitin Mukesh is a celebrated Bollywood actor.

One precious jewel in Mukesh's crown which some times appears to get shadowed under the vastness of his popular film music is his melodious narration and recording of the complete Tulsikrit Ramayana which used to be reverentially heard by a large number of devotees in India and abroad and is heard even today by its devotees.

After working for a number of music directors and getting himself recognized as a distinguished and well accomplished singer, he set his footsteps out of India with foreign musical tours to London, Africa, Canada, and USA. On 27th August 1976, while on a concert tour in the USA, Mukesh suffered a sudden, sharp and fatal heart attack in Detroit and breathed his last. The body was flown back to Mumbai and cremation of the legendary singer-actor took place at Banganga Crematorium, South Bombay on August 30, 1976 with sorrowful tributes by a large number of actors and personalities of the Indian film industry. With tears in his eyes, Raj Kapoor said, "I have lost my soul."



P.M. Modi remembers Mukesh on his 100th birth anniversary

A good number of his recorded songs came out in films released after his death, the last recorded one being for [Satyam Shivam Sundaram: \(1978\)](#), 'Chanchal sheetal nirmal komal' from the said movie. Most of Mukesh's songs are popular heart throbs, heard by admiring listeners all over the world even today and surely will ever continue to remain so. Mukesh, a man with the golden voice, was the jewel of the music industry and one amongst the best and popular playback singers of Indian film Industry, Apart from being a wonderful singer, he was also a very good human being, kind and generous at heart.

Forty seven years have gone by and hundreds of voices came and faded away over the years but one voice remains etched in the minds and hearts of Indians across the world; and that voice is of Mukesh, the inimitable king of passion and melody assimilated into one.

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