

The Gentleman Cartman

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What can you write about a person who, after being the founder of two premier world-class management institutions, becoming Professor Emeritus, being awarded Padma Bhushan, and becoming a legendary figure in his own lifetime, preferred to call himself by a most humble name “Cartman”?

This was Professor N.S. Ramaswamy. To me, a friend, philosopher and guide, to tens of thousand of others a source of inspiration and proper guidance to the right path, and to himself a man of such utter humility that he would invite the lowest caste Dalits to his house and wash their feet in reverence before feeding them. A man who lived over eight decades, and had the will, courage and desire to live a hundred years more if he did not have to succumb to laws of nature that took away this illustrious personality from our midst a few months ago.

It is always easy to occupy a position of authority. Many eminent people are appointed with fancy designations and they do a very good job of running an organization with all its staff, infrastructure and norms in place. But “Professor”, as he

was fondly called by all his students and learners, was a pioneer in setting up institutions where none existed. And that requires skills that are very rare, and which he possessed in abundance. Each of his masterpieces, NITIE in Mumbai, IIM in Bangalore, Indian Heritage Academy, will remain as reminders of his yeoman services to humanity.

His focus on ethical management was another unique feature that no other management professional gave significance to. He was totally committed, in today’s world of short-cuts, instant gratification, and selfishness, to the practice of the highest of values in corporate life. He trained tens of thousands of youngsters, who would always listen spell bound to him. In his own words, “when you give me the mike, don’t expect me to give up it easily,” he used to say. Nobody wanted you to give up the mike soon, Professor, and even though you have left the mike, your words and your guidance will resound in our minds forever. _____●

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