

# TRIBUTES TO RATAN NAVAL TATA



**28th December 1937 to 9th October 2024**

A titan among industrialists and a man who changed the paradigm of conducting business, Ratan Tata passed away at the age of 86 on 9th October 2024 in Mumbai. He helped usher India into the global market. With his exceptional trait of never demanding of his team what he could not himself deliver and surpass, he had the ability to instil confidence in his employees that he had their best interest at heart. A national icon, in the two decades as the commander of the country's largest business house, he led it to the summit with his dignified yet forceful leadership. Eloquent and honest in his views, he continued to uphold the Tata legacy of integrity, nation-building, and philanthropy.

Ratan Tata's very presence exuded a sense of reassurance. There was an intangible mystique about him which made people want to listen to him. With the strength of his character and his gravitas as the hallmarks of his personality, his ability to question the unquestionable and the courage to take on and conquer even the most daunting challenges as the cornerstones of his business philosophy, he successfully steered the Tata business house to greater glory. The saga had been both a personal triumph for him and an emblem of national pride. Strengthening the Tata corporate credo, he upheld the values the organisation he had always stood for. Above all, he had endeavoured to touch ordinary lives, both as a human being and as the head of the most pre-eminent business house in India.

He credited his parents Naval and Sonoo Tata for helping him cultivate a well-balanced attitude, despite his privileged background. He was also greatly inspired and influenced in his formative years by his grandmother, Lady Navajbai Tata, the widow of Sir Ratan Tata, the younger son of the Tata Group's founder, Jamsetji Tata. "She was a very principled person, and perhaps, what she considered most important was never to lose your dignity. And that thought stayed with him and carried him through life to a great extent," It was Ratan Tata's love for his grandmother and the hand of Fate that guided him to his present position. "After I graduated with a Degree in Architecture from Cornell University, I joined Jones and

Emmons in Los Angeles. But then, my grandmother fell ill and expressed the desire to see me, and so I came back. I guess destiny made me join Tatas,” he said.

Occupying the captain’s seat at the watershed moment in the country’s history when economic reforms threw open the doors to global players, Ratan Tata reinvigorated the Group to take on international competition by making it customer-focused and through strategic acquisitions, most prominent of them being Corus Steel and the Jaguar and Land Rover businesses from Ford.

The birth of Indica and the Nano were occasions he cherished the most. Tata Motors surmounted challenges to develop an entirely indigenous passenger car. “When the Indica was rolled out in 1998, it invoked great national pride and saw a scale of bookings not known previously in India,” he said. Nearly a decade later, Ratan Tata scripted another brilliant success story with Nano thus fulfilling his dream and the promise he made to Indian families – a safe, affordable car with low pollution and high fuel efficiency.

Ratan Tata was bestowed with the second highest civilian honour the ‘Padma Vibhushan’ by the Indian Government in 2008 and the Knight Grand Cross Award in 2014 by Queen Elizabeth for his services to England/India relations, inward investments to England and philanthropy. . He was an accomplished pilot and was fond of elegant cars.

As Ratan Tata embarks on his journey to Garothman Behest—the highest paradise in Zoroastrian belief—may his journey be filled with the same joy and harmony that he shared with the world.

***By: Meher Bhesania***

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Words are insufficient to describe his qualities of head and heart. He was our foremost Industrialist who headed multiple enterprises spread out not only in India but throughout the world and which provided employment to lakhs of individuals. Even more significant than his position as a Titanic Industrialist, was the philanthropy and charitable causes which he so earnestly and passionately promoted, and which provided succour to millions of impoverished people in our society.

He was a Titan of our times, who had left his indelible stamp on mankind. He has now achieved permanent place in the hearts of all Indians and in the abode of Heaven. May his soul rest in eternal peace!

***Dr. Burjorji H.Antia***

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I first saw Mr. Tata in the wide corridors of Nelco sometime in 1986 and then came face to face with him. I did not know him then. Yet, he extended his arm to shake my hand and thank me for my hard and sincere work for Nelco to shore up sales of its Nelco Blue Diamond TVs. That left a lasting impression on me, about the man. My commitment to Nelco increased manyfold. Over the subsequent decades, I met him many times though less frequently since Blue Diamond TVs could not compete against the questionable commercial practices of Indian businessmen importing TV sets, in CKD condition and selling them.

On one occasion, I met him in an India Airlines flight when he was travelling with JRD and he was kind enough to introduce me to him. I was fortunate to meet him recently, about 6 months ago at his elegant home with clean lines in Colaba along with a group of senior Parsi citizens to discuss welfare measures for Parsis, who needed financial assistance, specially in the health area. Though frail, he was mentally sharp and made many useful suggestions and volunteered help from his Insurance Company. I was surprised that he indulged in some Parsi banter with one or two of our older Parsi colleagues, who he seemed to know personally for decades. Recently, my daughter Lara heard at Harvard Business School, "The more power you have the more humble you should be and the more humble you are the more power you have." Perhaps, this thought was planted by Ratan Tata in Harvard, where a majestic building stands in his honour and makes India proud.

R.I.P. Rata Tata. What a man! What a life!



**By: Sam Balsara**

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During my corporate days it was a privilege for me to have been connected for quite a few years with the Tata Group of textile Mills as their Chief Marketing Consultant for retail sales, and later on Trustee in a couple of Tata Trusts till date. Was blessed that I had the opportunity to know the Titan in his lifetime.

Some from the media - both Parsi & Secular - having requested me to write a few lines about RNT (as we used to address him), I have shared the following lines:

"In the passing of Mr. Ratan Tata, our country has lost one of its most illustrious sons, who was a visionary industrialist who headed multiple enterprises that has effectively put India on the world map and provided employment to thousands of individuals spread over the length and breadth of India. Even more pronounced than his economic successes, he shaped the philanthropic and charitable sectors that have uplifted millions of impoverished people and brought them back into the mainstream of society.

A titan of our times, who having left his indelible stamp on mankind, has now stepped across the threshold into Paradise, where I am sure, those of good cheer and good humour among the eternally blessed would have hastened to welcome him.



*By: Dinshaw K. Tamboly*

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