

In memoriam, Amit Garg, 1977 - 2003

Most of us struggle with life; Amit embraced life. Living and enjoyment in living came naturally to him. What I will most remember is his smile. Smile when he would tell me that he has won a competition, and smile when he would inform me that our paper has been rejected.

Amit was a dreamer. Some men see things as they are and ask why. Others dream things that never were and ask why not. And, he was not content to ask. He was bent on changing the world to conform to his ideas. Those of us who were fortunate to know him remember a bundle of energy, ideas, laughter, action. He was reading, writing, learning, developing theories, implementing systems, and starting corporations, all simultaneously.

I had the privilege of working as a mentor and advisor for Amit. It was often not clear in our relationship who exactly was the advisor. And, I so miss being advised.

He would always argue vehemently, and still leave with a smile. Here is an email message he sent me last year:

Subject: letter of thanks

Just wanted to let you know that I greatly appreciate your open-mindedness and willingness to accomodate all view-points. I hope that i too will always be able to do that. Thanks.

Amit impressed me not only with his technical skills and personal charms, but with a well-developed social conscience that I would not have expected in one so young. Here is an excerpt from his home page (which I would urge you to read).

The dream of a global society "free from the limitation of geographic proximity as the sole basis of friendship, collaboration, play, and neighbourhood" began with the dawn of the global village phenomenon. Internet technologies have the potential to realize this hope. Indeed certain facets of this worldwide neo culture are already discernible: free expression, democracy, technical competence and consumerism. But whereas netizens might well achieve a state of global ecumene, the internet itself is unfortunately not an equal opportunity resource. 'Irrelevant' nations and peoples, the poor, the majority of women and most of the old will be alienated and thus silenced in the virtual world. The threat of a powerful techno-elite towering above a vast secondary society is very real and potentially disastrous.

I will end with a short piece from George Bernard Shaw, "The True Joy in Life".

This is the true joy in life, being used for a purpose recognized by yourself as a mighty one.

And being a force of nature instead of a feverish, selfish, little clod of ailments and grievances complaining that the world will not devote itself to making you happy.

I am of the opinion that my life belongs to the whole community. And for as long as I live, it is my privilege to do for it whatever I can.

I want to be thoroughly used up when I die, for the harder I work the more I live. I rejoice in life for its own sake. Life is no brief candle for me. It is sort of a splendid torch which I've got hold of for the moment. And I want to make it burn as brightly as possible before handing it on to future generations.

Amit lived.

Jayadev Misra
Austin, Texas

April 14, 2003