

## Late Professor Ramaswamy – Man, the Great.

Professor BM Hegde \*

*“Heights by great men reached and kept were not obtained by sudden flight but, while their companions slept, they were toiling upward in the night.”*

*Henry Wadsworth Longfellow*

Professor N.S. Ramaswamy, the wise old man of Indian educational scenario, is no more. He was at work which was close to his heart, almost to his last breath. A short terminal illness took him away from our midst but, his spirit will have to guide the Indian educational firmament for all times to come. Late Professor Ramaswamy was not an individual but an institution himself. He founded the Indian Institute of Management in Bangalore (Bengaluru now), and nurtured the institution almost till his death. If today IIMB has a name in the country the credit, to a very large extent, should rightly go to Late Professor Ramaswamy.

He was peerless in his ability as a management guru of India. His ideas of management were far ahead of his times and, naturally, were misunderstood at that time. Known only as CARTMAN, he revolutionized our thinking in the field of energy management and pollution control. If only we had incorporated his ideas at that time today we would not be in the bad mess that we are in. Bangalore is a city with flat roads and we should have encouraged and made it fashionable for the rich and the powerful to be

seen with their bicycles! His research was not the usual me too and copy cat one like today. Every thought of his took human knowledge forwards by refuting many false dogmas and myths in his field. Rightly so, he was designated National Professor of Management for life.

To cite an example, one important area of management, ethics in management, is all but disappearing from management education, thanks to the clamour for money and status for managers. The Laissize Faire has only added to this mess. Man, with his proclivity for comfort and his greed, is threatening to destroy all God given resources in this world in the name of development. They seem to be following the dictum of Bernard Mandeville, Adam Smith’s teacher, who had said that “in corporate business all that matters is profit irrespective of consequences.” Ramaswamy brought in fresh air there by incorporating humane, ethical management training to his students. For him education meant training a human being to “act justly, skillfully and magnanimously under all circumstances of war and peace”. Value based education was his passion which he perused till his last day.

---

\* [hegdebm@gmail.com](mailto:hegdebm@gmail.com)

Indian heritage, culture, diversity of languages, philosophy and spirituality were in his blood. He would go round the country lecturing and expounding on these always. Personally he was deeply spiritual. He could quote Indian scriptures to corroborate and strengthen his arguments at any time. It was pleasure listening to his lectures. They were indeed sermons and not just talks. He was not a fanatic, though. Ramaswamy was truly secular in his outlook-which simply meant- “loving one’s religion while respecting all others in this world” sincerely, which he did all his life. I have been following his teachings very closely and had the greatest respect for the man and his views. He was one of the dying breed of Sanskrit scholars of this country, consequently an intelligent thinker.

Ramaswamy’s love for the animals, the mute recipients of human greed, rage and neglect, was legendary. He had an animal farm next to his home where all homeless animals could come and stay and get fed. It was a sight for the Gods. He was planning a much bigger animal farm in the future. The powers that be had a great respect for him and he could get what he wanted. His sleeping pet dogs were the only ones that kept me away from his house in Bangalore, which I would have otherwise frequented many more times. Whenever I was

there I not only enjoyed his wife's excellent Kerala food but, their loving hospitality, unparalleled in all its dimensions. My efforts to speak to him during his last days did not fructify. May be, there is a message in that too. While speech is silver, silence could be golden. Being a very good man, Late Ramaswamy always spoke well of others. Hardly ever had I heard him bad mouth any one.

Personally he was a great friend and guide to me in my research efforts at The World Academy of Authentic Healing Sciences, Mangalore. Ramaswamy offered his services for the good cause suo moto and took great interest in its working almost till the time he was terminally ill. I shall remain ever grateful for his generosity. He was a great man, a loving husband, a doting father, a teacher in the true Indian Guru tradition, an original thinker, an innovator, a researcher par excellence and, above all, a human and humane friend in need. It will be impossible to have a clone of him for generations to come. May God rest his soul in eternal peace? The world would be poorer to that extent with his absence.

“Great men are they who see that spiritual is stronger than any material force - that thoughts rule the world”. *Ralph Waldo Emerson*

“There must be a reason why some people can afford to live well. They must have worked for it. I only feel angry when I see waste. When I see people throwing away things we could use.”

– **Mother Teresa (1910-1997), A Gift for God, 1975.**

