

# REFLECTIONS



A Hindu Cultural Center of Albany Hindu Temple Society's Newsletter devoted to the Capital District's Indian-American community particularly its seniors

## Guest Editorial: REFLECTIONS FROM A DISTANCE:

By Dr. Sastry Sreepada, Ph.D.



I was fortunate to watch the growth of Hindu Temple and Cultural centers in the Capital District since 1979. Since I moved away from capital district in June 2017 I had time to reflect on these.

The role of religion in Hinduism changes as one grows up. By my liberal modern interpretation there are four stages Brahmacharya (learning phase), Gruhastha (family person), Vaanaprastha (matured person) and Sanyasa (Sat+Nyasa meaning good activity -a stage of liberation/freedom from wants and attachments).

As we grew up in India we learnt (Brahmacharya) by following the practices of our parents, grandparents and the community around us. We assumed progressive roles of the four stages. Thus Religion and Culture provided us the acceptance and belonging. When we immigrated we were left with a big void in source of acceptance (Religious and Cultural). It left many of us wondering, how we play our roles and provide the personal fulfillment of

Religious and Cultural acceptance and belonging to our children.

It began with a hall in what are the priest quarters today, with a worship/puja on Sundays with a community member as a volunteer priest. The community got together for special occasions in the same hall. It was difficult to find teachers of Indian music/dance.

Now with the dedicated efforts of several people we have a Full fledged temple with 3 priests and a Cultural center. Now we have Heritage Program for young children. We now celebrate several major special religious events such as Ganesh Chaturdhi etc. We have several scheduled weekly prayer/worship services to various deities (on all seven days). There are chanting lessons from priests. There are several Pravachans on various topics. Thus we have provided ourselves with the opportunities and choices to learn (Brahmacharya), raise our children appropriately (Gruhastha), religiously mature (Vaanaprastha) and prepare ourselves to evolve in to better persons (Sanyasa).

On the Cultural front we have made major progress. We celebrate cultural programs of every region organized by the volunteers. We have important instructional programs for various forms of Dance and Music. More we

have programs for community at large such as Yoga, AIM for Seva etc. We have Indian community represented in Diversity programs organized by the state.

In summary we have in 5 Decades firmly established enough opportunities to belong culturally and religiously with opportunity for all to participate and serve.

My early spiritual development was nurtured by my parents. Reflecting on the last four decades the HTS, all the priests over the years and the respected community leaders that are responsible for the growth of HTS and HCC played an important role in the spiritual growth of our family. I am glad and thankful that HTS is an integral part of my life.

\*Sastry Sreepada moved to New Jersey recently to be close to his children. The family lived in Albany for 38 years. He and his wife, Lakshmi, were very active in the temple. They were greatly admired for their immense knowledge about Hinduism and devotion to the temple. ■

**We are always looking for ways to improve the Newsletter and we welcome suggestions. Please send your comments and ideas to Ram Chugh at [Reflections.hcc@gmail.com](mailto:Reflections.hcc@gmail.com).**

## Sun, UV radiation and the health of your eyes:

**Pamela Kaw, MD\*** Many people are confused about the effect of sun exposure on their eyes. I will try to alleviate some of this confusion by providing some in-depth



information about related topics/terms.

### UV light

Visible light corresponds to range of 400- 700 nanometer ( nm) wavelength of light and color range from violet to red. Human eye cannot see the spectrum of light outside these wavelengths and colors. Light spectrum beyond the violet light (

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corresponding to 400 nm) is called ultraviolet light and is the most damaging to human beings by causing light induced toxicity and cancer formation. Ultraviolet light range is subdivided according to the wavelengths : UVA range 400-315 nm, UVB range 315-280 nm and UVC range 200-100 nm. UVC light has a wavelength that is too short to reach the earth and is absorbed by the earth's atmosphere and so is inconsequential to human beings. Of the solar light reaching the earth 95% is UVA and 5% is UVB. Most common light source on earth is the solar light; however with advent of sunbeds, there are man made toxic sources of light as well. More and more of these sunbeds emit UVA; necessitating proper precautions.

#### Glare

Glare deals with visible spectrum of light. It is just annoying and not necessarily harmful to your eyes. Polarised lenses allow only a portion of the light to pass through the lenses and help with avoiding glare.

#### Eclipse and solar viewers

Sunglasses, cameras, telescopes, binoculars DO NOT PROTECT provide safe views of the eclipse. Special eclipse glasses or hand held solar viewers should be used and the directions should be followed exactly to keep your eyes safe if you want to watch this amazing phenomenon.

#### Sunglasses

Sunglasses that block both UVA and UVB are the most protective. These are sometimes labeled as UV400 or 100% protection. Wrap arounds and large sunglasses offer better protection. Tinted lenses or transition lenses do not offer UV protection automatically.

#### Sunscreens and SPF:

SPF or sun protective factor denotes the amount of protection offered by topical application of sunscreen. For eg a sunscreen with SPF 30 means that this sunscreen, if applied according to directions, will allow only 1/30th of the solar radiation to be absorbed by the skin. The rest is either reflected back to the atmosphere or absorbed by the sunscreen. None of the sunscreens

offer total protection, hence the term sunblock has lately had a pushback by federal regulating agencies.

#### Eye conditions related to sunlight exposure :

In recent years scientists have studied the effect of sunlight on human skin and we now have ample evidence that wrinkles, rhytides, crow's feet, yellowness and other discoloration, telangiectasia ( dilated blood vessels ) around the eye can be prevented to a large extent by protecting against sun exposure. Skin cancers like squamous and basal cell cancers and melanomas and some precancerous conditions like actinic keratosis have been linked strongly to the cell damage caused by solar radiation. Degeneration caused by ultraviolet radiation causes formation of bumps called pinguecula and pterygium on the white of the eye, called the sclera. These are very common in tropical parts of the world and also in workers and athletes who spend a large part of their day outdoors. At times these bumps can progress to threaten vision and have to be surgically removed. Although cataracts are formed as we age, the rate of progression is rapid in eyes exposed to more sunlight. Solar light can also cause burn in the retina called solar retinopathy, which can lead to significant damage to vision.

#### Benefits of sunlight

All of us in the northeast know the happiness generated by sun kissed summer afternoons after months of wintry gloom. SAD, an acronym for seasonal affective disorder, has been linked to inadequate daylight exposure during winter months. Sunlight plays a major part in our circadian rhythm and associated sleep - wake cycle and also generates an ample amount Vitamin D in the skin, especially in fair skinned people. Vit D is important for bone health and its deficiency is being linked to cancer , depression, coronary artery disease and asthma in children. Recent studies are linking inadequate sunlight exposure to development of nearsightedness or myopia in kids!

In summary, we all need sunlight in moderation. Know your sunscreens and the amount of protection they offer. Remember sun is not the only source of UV radiation. Use protective eyewear when tanning. Enjoy your summer!!

\*Pamela Kaw MD is in private practice in Troy, NY. For any questions regarding the article please email her @ [pamkaw@gmail.com](mailto:pamkaw@gmail.com)



The Dalai Lama, when asked what surprised him most about humanity, he said:

"Man. Because he sacrifices his health in order to make money.

Then he sacrifices money to recuperate his health.

And then he is so anxious about the future that he does not enjoy the present;

The result being that he does not live in the present or the future;

He lives as if he is never going to die, and then dies having never really lived."

#### From Hellen Keller

\*The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched - they must be felt with the heart.

\*Walking with a friend in the dark is better than walking alone in the light.

\* The only thing worse than being blind is having sight but no vision.

\* The highest result of education is tolerance..

## Healthy Relationships

Reflections on the 'Androcles and the Lion' story

By CS Rao\*



**The Story:** Androcles, a slave in the kingdom of Greece, was disgusted with his life. He ran away, knowing very well, the risk of death if he were to get caught. Next

morning, he was found missing and immediately a band of soldiers set out searching for him.

Androcles ran as fast as he could. When he could run no more due to hunger and exhaustion, he sat on a boulder. He was resigned to his death either from wild animals or on getting caught. Looking around, he saw a lion at a distance, walking towards him. He knew he could not run away to save his life in his exhausted condition. He continued watching the approaching lion with resignation.

To his surprise, the lion was not running towards him but walking slowly. When it came closer, he could see one of its legs limping. He guessed it must be hungry, not being able to hunt. He expected it to jump on him any moment.

The lion came to him slowly and raised it limping leg high. He immediately closed his eyes anticipating a paw hit but was surprised when nothing happened. He opened his eyes and found the lion still holding its paw up, as if showing it to him.

His fear subsided and his curiosity was aroused. Keenly observing the sole, he found it swollen with pus. He guessed there may be a thorn embedded in it. He got fully involved in the situation and took the courageous step of taking the paw in his hands, locating the thorn and removing it. He squeezed out all the pus and bandaged it with part of his shirt. Now he expected the lion to attack him. To his utter disbelief and relief, the lion quietly walked away into the forest.

After some time, the king's soldiers found him, shackled and took him back to the kingdom. As per the law of the land, his death punishment was announced in all the villages. On the appointed day, people filled the large arena, to see him being put to death.

A lion was kept starving in advance, to make sure it promptly attacked the prisoner when released. Androcles was brought in and tied to a pole at the center of the arena. The cage with the starving lion was pulled into the arena. The door of the cage was opened, setting the lion free. People held their breath anticipating the gruesome act of the lion eating Androcles alive. The Lion ran roaring towards helpless Androcles. As soon as it came near him, it stopped dead in its tracks and began licking him. All the people and the king were stunned at the exceptional sight of a hungry lion sparing its prey and behaving like his pet.

You guessed it right! It was the same lion whose life was saved by Androcles. When the king learned from Androcles about his help to this lion, he felt happy and set him free. It is of course a story that ends happily with lessons about courage, sacrifice and gratitude.

Now let us reflect on the characters, incidents and insights in this story.

### Reflections:

**Androcles** had the courage to look at the condition of the limping lion under a life threatening situation. He wanted to use his last day in the best possible manner. He did not expect a return favor from the lion. In hindsight, he might have saved his life by not running away. How? If he did succeed in running away, he was bound to be caught sometime later and certainly put to gruesome death.

Though he was himself in a life threatening situation, he maintained a cool and focused Mind, found the thorn and removed it. He even sacrificed a part of his shirt to bandage the wound.

Compared with the lion, Androcles was a puny creature. But he had the unique capability for diagnosing the cause for the lion's limp and the skills for taking out the thorn. His life was saved two times. First, by the grateful lion whose life he saved. But then the king could still have put him to death by other means. He didn't. The king also saved Androcles' life, even though he violated the law of the land by running away. This was like Androcles investing a small kind deed (taking out a tiny thorn) in bank A (the lion) expecting no returns but he got the priceless return of his life itself. Then he got another priceless return from a second bank B (the king) though he didn't invest in it and on the other hand, broke king's law!

**The Lion:** The lion had the presence of mind to see a potential savior in Androcles even knowing he] might be having a gun or knife and might kill it, instead of helping it. It also took a risk. Though a lion is the powerful king of the forest, it had to swallow its pride, to seek help from a weakling like Androcles. After the lion got help from Androcles, it had the decency of not feeding on its savior. The thorn was tiny but was causing the starvation of the lion that would ultimately have led to its death. It is an irony of nature that though a lion could kill even an elephant, it couldn't take out a tiny thorn from its own foot! So powerful but so helpless!

### Let us introspect:

How often we may be suffering endlessly, handicapped by some thorns in our bodies, minds or relationships, unable to take them out on our own? We may not even be able to see the hidden thorns. Each of us, though strong in many respects, may need help from a weakling like Androcles to help us rid ourselves of some thorns. But our egos, family upbringing and cultural inhibitions may prevent us from seeking help from others. On the other hand, how many among us viciously insert thorns into others' minds, bodies or relationships?



How much better our lives can be, if we can cooperate with each other and take out the tiny thorns from each others' minds, bodies and relationships, taking some risks and putting in some efforts? Can we be collectively wise in reclaiming our lives and happiness in the blink of a time we are privileged to live on planet earth?

\* C.S Rao, a retired Mechanical Engineer, offers seminars and classes to relieve stress and consequent mind, body and relationship problems. Other articles of the author can be seen in his website:

<http://countingbreaths.com/resources/my-articles/>

## Swami Vivekananda and his everlasting contributions (Part I):

By Dr. M.G.Prasad, Ph.D\*



### Introduction:

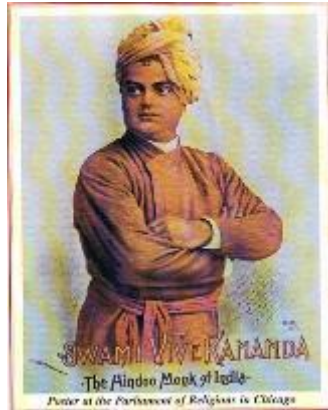
Swami Vivekananda is very well known not only in India but also around the world through his everlasting contributions. His name, work and

writings have been inspiring generations of people and will continue to inspire the future generations. This article presents some of his great contributions to Hinduism, India and the world.

### Younger years:

Swami Vivekananda was formerly named as Narendranath (Naren) Datta. He was born on the day of a Hindu festival namely Makara Sankranti (January 12, 1863) in Kolkata, West Bengal, India to his parents mother Srimati Bhuvaneshwari Devi and father Sri Viswanatha Datta. His father Sri Viswanatha Datta was a noted lawyer and was very proficient in English and Persian. He had studied Hindu scriptures and was progressive with rationalistic outlook. Also he was a

very charitable person. Mother Srimati Bhuvaneshwari Devi was traditional and religious. She used to tell the stories of Ramayana and Mahabharata to young Naren, which highly influenced him at an early age. It is to be noted that even in his early years Naren demanded convincing arguments while engaged in discussions. Also even from the young age, he had a gift that when reading a book, he could understand the author without reading every line in the book. His memory was prodigious.



### Major events in his life

In college days Naren was muscular and agile. He enjoyed serious studies. He specialized in western philosophy. Once one of his professors, Prof. Hastie remarked about Naren "*He (Naren) is a real genius. I have traveled far and wide but have not yet come across a lad of his talents and possibilities even among the philosophical students in German universities. He is bound to make his mark in life.*" Also it is interesting to note that Prof. Hastie, in a lecture to Naren's class on William Wordsworth's poem "The Excursion", referred to Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa when referring to trances as religious ecstasies resulting from purity and concentration.

Naren finishes studies from Presidency College, Calcutta when he was of age 16. Then Naren meets Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa when he was of age 18. Later at the age of 21, Naren passes his B.A. examination. Also at his age of 21, Naren's father Sri Viswanatha Datta passes away. Then when Naren is of age 23, his master Sri

Ramakrishna Paramahansa passes away. Then Naren and eight fellow disciples of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa take to the oath of monastic order at which time Naren becomes Swami Vivekananda and they set up Baranagore Math in 1886. In the Math, Narendra and fellow disciples used to spend many hours in practicing meditation and religious austerities every day.

### Travels of Swami Vivekananda

In 1888, Swami Vivekananda left the monastery as a *Parivrājaka*— the Hindu religious life of a wandering monk, "without fixed abode, without ties, independent and strangers

wherever they go". His sole possessions were a kamandalu (water pot), staff and his two favorite books: the Bhagavad Geeta and The Imitation of Christ. He traveled extensively in India for five years, visiting centers of learning and acquainting himself with diverse religious traditions and social patterns. He developed sympathy for the suffering and poverty of the people, and resolved to uplift the nation. Living primarily on bhiksha (alms), he traveled on foot and by railway (with tickets bought by admirers). During his travels he met, and stayed with Indians from all religions and walks of life: scholars, dewans, rajas, Hindus, Muslims, Christians, laborers and government officials.

Swami Vivekananda (at age 30) left Bombay for Chicago on May 31, 1893 to participate in the World Parliament of Religions. There he made his historic speech.

The Parliament of Religions opened on September 11, 1893. On this day, Vivekananda gave a brief speech representing India and Hinduism. He was initially nervous, bowed to Saraswati (the Hindu goddess of learning) and began his speech with "*Sisters and brothers of America!*" At these words, Vivekananda received a two-minute standing ovation from the crowd of seven thousand. His first short speech became everlasting.

Sisters and Brothers of America,

It fills my heart with joy unspeakable to rise in response to the warm and cordial welcome that you have given us. I thank you in the name of the most ancient order of monks in the world; I thank you in the name of the mother of religions; and I thank you in the name of millions and millions of Hindu people of all classes and sects.

My thanks, also, to some of the speakers on this platform who, referring to the delegates from the Orient, have told you that these men from far-off nations may well claim the honor of bearing to different lands the idea of toleration. I am proud to belong to a religion which has taught the world both tolerance and universal acceptance.

We believe not only in universal toleration, but we accept all religions as true. I am proud to belong to a nation, which has sheltered the persecuted, and the refugees of all religions and all nations of the earth. I am proud to tell you that we have gathered in our bosom the purest remnant of the Israelites, who came to Southern India and took refuge with us in the very year in which their holy temple was shattered to pieces by Roman tyranny.

I am proud to belong to the religion, which has sheltered and is still fostering the remnant of the grand Zoroastrian nation. I will quote to you, brethren, a few lines from a hymn which I remember to have repeated from my earliest boyhood, which is every day repeated by millions of human beings: *"As the different streams having their sources in different places all mingle their water in the sea, so, O Lord, the different paths which men take through different tendencies, various though they appear, crooked or straight, all lead to Thee."*

The Parliament of Religions' President [John Henry Barrows](#) said, *"India, the Mother of religions was represented by Swami Vivekananda, the Orange-monk who exercised the most wonderful influence over his auditors"*. American newspapers

reported Swami Vivekananda as *"the greatest figure in the parliament of religions"* and *"the most popular and influential man in the parliament"*. The [New York Herald](#) noted, *"Vivekananda is undoubtedly the greatest figure in the Parliament of Religions. After hearing him we feel how foolish it is to send missionaries to this learned nation."*

Swami Vivekananda traveled in USA and UK giving lectures and establishing Vedanta Societies and Centers and returned to India in 1897. Then during 1897 to 1899, he worked in India on many causes. On May 1, 1897 in Calcutta, Vivekananda founded the [Ramakrishna Mission](#) for social service. Its ideals are based on [Karma Yoga](#).

Swami Vivekananda traveled west again during 1899 to 1900 to participate in Parliament of Religions in Paris. After his return from west to India, he did pilgrimage tours to Bodhagaya and Varanasi. On July 4, 1902 Swami Vivekananda at age of 39 passed away to eternity.

\*Dr. Prasad is a spiritual disciple of Yogi-Seer Sriiranga Sadguru of Karnataka, India. He is a Professor of Mechanical Engineering at Stevens Institute of Technology. His website is [www.taranga.us](http://www.taranga.us) and he can be reached at [mgprasad@comcast.net](mailto:mgprasad@comcast.net)



Your work is going to fill a large part of your life, and the only way to be truly satisfied is to do what you believe is great work. And the only way to do great work is to love what you do. If you haven't found it yet, keep looking. Don't settle. As with all matters of the heart, you'll know when you find it.

– Steve Jobs

## [Newsmakers in Our Community \(New Feature\)](#)

*Editor's note: We are adding a new feature to the newsletter to highlight the distinguished accomplishments and recognitions of individuals from our community. We request our community members to share with us the names of individuals who you feel have received such high recognition.*

### Manoj R Shah\*



Manoj joined RPI this month as a full time faculty member after working for GE for almost 34 years! His GE career involved working for a number of GE businesses starting with naval ship service power system,

electromagnetic launcher

He was recognized by GE back in 1991 with an award for "Most outstanding contribution and individual achievement" for making groundbreaking contributions to naval ship propulsion system technologies. After spending 17 years at a number of GE businesses, he moved to GE's Global Research Center in Niskayuna. At the research center, he led multi-year, multi-disciplinary programs for GE businesses and externals such as the US Govt.

He provided internal technical consulting and mentoring at all global sites such as in Bangalore, India and Munich, Germany. He worked on many state-of-the-art technical projects for military and commercial applications.

All the above work was performed with a world-class team comprising engineers with Ph.D.'s in electrical, mechanical, heat-transfer, materials,



metallurgical and many other disciplines from all over the world working at many global sites!

Manoj has been awarded many external and GE-internal awards:

1. In 2002, he was elected Fellow of the Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers (IEEE), an international organization with close to a million members. This honor is bestowed on only 1/2% of the membership!
2. In 2012, Manoj received the highest international technical field award in electric power engineering from IEEE called the Nikola Tesla award. He is the first one to receive such an honor from any IIT.
3. GE awarded him the Coolidge Fellowship award, the highest research award in GE.
4. In 2015, IEEE again honored him with Gerald Kliman award for Innovation.

Manoj retired from GE – Global Research in May of 2016 and has been consulting as well as teaching while enjoying life playing golf as well as traveling with his very patient wife, Mira, a dentist in our area. By the time he retired from GE, he had authored or co-authored 70 US patents with many international ones and several still pending. He also has close to 50 technical publications to his credit again written with his team.

Presently, his fulltime position at RPI keeps him busy as he is teaching three courses. He firmly believes in sharing the knowledge he has acquired over the years and considers it his solemn obligation to the next/future generations.

Manoj is a life member of the Hindu Temple as well as TRICIA. He worked for the temple as a BOT from 1993 to 2004 in various capacities such as newsletter editor, secretary, vice-chair, nomination & election committee chair, and so on. He also was president of TRICIA in 1999.

He and Mira raised two children, Manjool and Meghna. Manjool, an ophthalmologist, is a faculty member at Kellogg Eye Institute, University of

Michigan, specializing in Glaucoma and minimally invasive eye surgery. Manjool's wife, Anona, is a technical writer and a journalist. Meghna is an assistant professor of pediatrics and osteopathy at Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine.

Manoj feels that he is blessed to have been raised by wonderful parents in Mumbai. In spite of facing financial challenges, they never made him and his four siblings feel any pressure as each one received at least a Bachelor's degree! His primary and secondary schools as well as IIT-Kharagpur gave him a foundation that launched his career! His wife, Mira, has been a source of strength and inspiration to him as she serves our community quietly by opening her office on weekends to those in our community without dental insurance! Their two children have established themselves well, thanks to the community involvement while being raised. The core group of friends has always stood by the Shahs in good times as well as challenging times such as deaths and sickness.

Manoj feels a deep sense of gratitude to all who have made his and his family's lives whole! GE, in spite of all the present day bad news of layoffs and financial challenges, has been good to him and he cannot thank the company enough for giving him the opportunities to succeed.

\* Professor – Electrical, Computer and Systems Engineering Department, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Troy, NY; Retired Principal Engineer – GE Global Research Center, Niskayuna, NY.



What lies behind you and what lies in front of you, pales in comparison to what lies inside of you.

- **Ralph Waldo Emerson**

## Manoj Ajmera\*



Manoj Ajmera of Clifton Park is chairman of the Festival of Nations, a founder of the Tri-City India Association, and a member of the boards of the Hindu Temple Cultural

Center and the International Center of the Capital Region. He is also the current chairman of the recently-formed Gujarati Samaj of the Capital District.

A native of Bombay, India, Manoj has lived in the Capital District since the 1960s, and he has been involved in numerous volunteer endeavors that have touched thousands of lives.

The retired state environmental engineer is best known as chairman of the Festival of Nations, a post he has held for more than a quarter of a century. The festival is held every year in October at Empire State Plaza in Albany. The event is attended by thousands each year. It is a five-hour extravaganza of music, dance, arts, and food from around the world. Manoj is the driving force behind the event, now in its fifth decade of existence.

While the festival is his passion, it's not his only endeavor. He is a founding member of the Tricity India Association and has served as its President and Chairman of the Board for many years. People consider him to be a true historian for the Indian community. He holds credit to come up with the name of TRICIA for the association. In 1981, TRICIA honored Manoj and his wife, Rita, for their services at its Annual function. It was presented by Ambassador Mr. Narayana who later became President of India.

Manoj also served on the Hindu Temple Board of Governors and is one of the major supporters. Currently, he is a Board member of the Hindu Cultural Center in Albany. He is also an

active member of the Albany Rotary Club, serving on many committees. He has twice led teams of young professionals to India under the Rotary International's group study exchange program.

Manoj started the popular "Best-Tasting Drinking Water in New York State" contest more than 30 years ago and still volunteers his time and energy conducting the contests statewide. For his efforts, he received the State Health Commissioner's recognition award. He has also served the American Water Works Association, an international professional organization for people in the water industry, in various roles and received the association's highest award for member recruiting.

Manoj received the prestigious Jefferson Award for Public Service in 2005, the Third Age Award few years after that from Senior Services of Albany for his volunteerism and was also recognized by the Town of Clifton Park during its 175th anniversary celebration. He also served on the Albany Tulip Queen Selection Committee for many years. Additionally, he served as a member on the boards of the International Center of the Capital Region, Boy Scouts of America, and Clifton Park Senior Center.

He has made his mark with the political leaders of Capital District. Manoj holds the record, among the local Indian community, for his appearances in the media including TV, newspapers and radio stations. He is well known for his quick wits and sense of humor, not only to us, but also to non-Indians.

Volunteerism and giving back to the community are truly ways of life for our friend and colleague.

Hats off to Manoj for what he has done for decades and still continues to do in service of not only the Indian community, but also the entire Capital District. ■

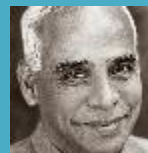
### Message from Dr. Govind Rao, Chair Hindu Temple Board and Vikash Agrawal, Chair, HCC Board

We are pleased to bring out yet another issue of *Reflections*. This issue includes articles on spirituality, religion, health, newsmakers in the community and a tribute to Swami Vivekananda

We are thankful to Manoj Ajmera, Pam Kaw, M.G. Prasad, C.S Rao, Manoj Shah and Sastry Sreepada for their articles. We are grateful to Dr. Ram Chugh for his tireless efforts for soliciting and editing such a rich collection of articles, and to Vijay Oruganti for formatting it.

The newsletter is being sent out electronically using the email lists accessible to the HCC. Some of you might get duplicate copies because you may be on several e-mail lists. You may delete any duplicates. Let us know if you do not wish to receive this Newsletter.

**Please send your comments and story ideas to Dr. Ram Chugh at:**  
[Reflections.HCC@Gmail.com](mailto:Reflections.HCC@Gmail.com)



A mind that is fast is sick. A mind that is slow is sound. A mind that is still is divine (Meher Baba)

Somehow, in our modern civilization, we have acquired the idea that the mind is working best when it runs at top speed. Yet a racing mind lacks time even to finish a thought, let alone to check on its quality. When we slow down the mind, we work better at everything we do. Not only is the quality of our work better, we are actually able to get more done. A calm, smooth running mind flow of thought saves a lot of wear and tear on the nervous system, which we have more vitality and resilience in the face of stress.

– Eknath Easwaran

### Negative Thoughts

Self-confidence and courage hinge on the kind of thoughts you think. Nurture negative thoughts over a long period of time and you are going to get negative results. Your subconscious is very accommodating. It will send up to you exactly what you send down to it. Keep on sending it fear and self-inadequacy thoughts and that is what it will feed back to you. Take charge of your mind and begin to fill it with healthy, positive and courageous thoughts.

– Vincent Peale

### Way to Happiness

"Whenever we hold on to our anger, we turn "small stuff" into really "big stuff" in our minds. We start to believe that our positions are more important than our happiness. They are not. If you want to be a more peaceful person you must understand that being right is almost never more important than yourself to be happy. The way to be happy is to let go, and reach out. Let other people be right." - **Richard Carlson**, Don't Sweat the Small Stuff, page 44).

**We are always looking for ways to improve the Newsletter and we welcome suggestions. Please send your comments and ideas to Ram Chugh at [Reflections.hcc@gmail.com](mailto:Reflections.hcc@gmail.com).**