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My Turn Retiring to Service of Divine Man

By Natesan Janakiraman, M.D. The four Hindu ashramas (orders) of life are brahmacharya (celibate studentship,) grihastha (marriage), vanaprastha (detachment) and sannyasa (renunciation). Most of us go through the first three phases. Having fulfilled the duties, goals and obligations of the first two, my wife Vatsala and I recently entered the third order of vanaprastha ashrama. Our daughters Vidya and Ajita are happily married, and we have three grandchildren. I worked at Cook County Children's hospital from my arrival in Chicago in 1970 until 1992 as Director of the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit. Though there is no retirement age at this institution, I opted to retire at the age of 62 and serve as a voluntary attending physician. In India, I studied both the ayurvedic and allopathic systems of medicine and served in many hospitals in rural and urban areas of Tamil Nadu for fifteen years. As we enter the third phase, my wife and I are gradually detaching ourselves from the hustling and bustling activities of modern life. We devote our time to serve the family, friends, relatives and the community at large. The knowledge and experience gained in medicine and in real life is shared with my friends and colleagues. At present I am teaching medical students and residents in training twice a week. Free consultation is provided in the care of critically ill children. Vatsala is involved in teaching religion to young children at the Hindu Temple of Greater Chicago. We were teaching Sanskrit to both adults and children. I am a member of the Hindu Dharma/Philosophy committee and plan to continue teaching Sanskrit. Every year we visit India and spend four months, mostly in Madras. We visit great saints, worship at temples and attend religious discourses. We participate in singing bhajanas and enjoy listening to Carnatic music concerts. While in Madras, I visit various public and private hospitals and provide free teaching and consultation services. Lectures on important topics are delivered to medical and health care professionals. God has provided me plenty of opportunities in life to enrich my knowledge. It is now my time and duty to give, share and enjoy. Our last trip to Madras was very rewarding. To serve the sick and the needy in any manner without expecting anything in return will be my desired goal until my last breath. I personally felt and experienced the hands of God in many inexplicable forms and manifestations through all the people I came in contact with. My friend, Mr. B. Srinivasan of Chicago, who was with me also had similar experiences. Vatsala and I enjoy travel in different countries and try to understand the people and their cultures. We read religious scriptures and inculcate the lofty and high traditional and cultural values of Hindu Dharma in our grand-

children and whomsoever is interested. Selfless service brings utmost joy, peace and bliss. Only then God is realized as omnipresent, omnipotent and omniscient. It is our humble and sincere prayer that everyone will strive for this achievable goal. Natesan Janakiraman, M.D., a voluntary physician at Cook County Children's Hospital and vice-chairman and professor, Department of Pediatrics at the University of Health Sciences/Chicago Medical School was instrumental in founding the Hindu Temple of Greater Chicago.