

# *From where I am*

A VIEW OF ROTARY

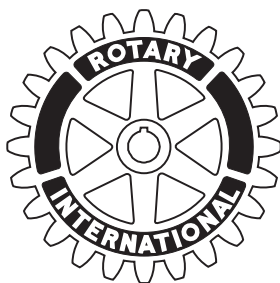


Rtn. Ashok Mahajan  
Director  
Rotary International, 2007-09



# From Where I Am

## A View of Rotary



by  
**Rtn. ASHOK MAHAJAN**  
Director, Rotary International 2007–09.

## **From Where I Am - A View of Rotary**

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# Preface



My colleague RI Director Ashok Mahajan has written a remarkable book about the various facets of service through Rotary. The book is so elegantly written, so understanding of our embedded principles and objects and so useful for our organisation and personal lives that it is going to be a significant addition to my library. I recommend this book to everyone I know.

I have never known a mentor in Rotary on improving personal effectiveness to generate such a positive reaction. Anyone reading this book will quickly understand the enormous effect I and others have had to Ashok Mahajan's views. He has opened the minds of Rotarians to the important guiding factors of life - values, family, relationships and communication.

This book teaches with conviction and feeling. Few Rotarians would have thought as long and hard about the principles of developing Rotary as Ashok Mahajan. At a time when Rotary desperately needs to energise people and produce leaders at all levels, this book provides an empowering philosophy that is the best guarantee of success in running our organisation. The book is a perfect blend of wisdom and practical experience. People who read this book will live by the principles of Rotary and their lives will be enriched.



*Wilfrid J Wilkinson  
President, 2007–2008  
Rotary International*



# In my Defence



This book is dedicated to all the Rotarians who have helped me to travel on a road to purpose. In my journey with my fellow Rotarians, I have tried to bring hope to thousands of people and have found the purpose of my life along the way.

Many of my thoughts in this book have come from noble leaders of Rotary who have travelled the world to bring dignity and mobility to millions of people. If Rotary has grown in the world and in particular in our region, the credit belongs to the members who are actually in the arena, who dirty their hands and dress and strive valiantly against all odds. The few shortcomings are eclipsed by the enthusiasm and devotion of our members. The set-back in meeting the targets in polio eradication is not a failure. We have dared greatly and without Rotary's initiative, world would have never been nearer to the goal and victory.

I have learnt simple lessons and have strived to live a simple life. My life in Rotary has put me across to people who have taught me to look beyond myself and I have been blessed to be associated with visionaries who have a true purpose, a calling, higher than just trying to fill up their savings in the bank. I know how they feel and with their guidance I have tried to climb above conflict and the pursuit of material success.

My thoughts in this book, which have been published every month in the Rotary News magazine, are an outcome of my desire to touch others and strengthen our movement. There are experiences in one's life that can change you forever. Rotary is such an experience. It has given me a different impression of the world and the people. I will continue my journey with this new understanding.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ashok', with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

*Ashok Mahajan*  
*Director, 2007–2009*  
*Rotary International*

***Smile - Serve - Sacrifice - Satisfy***





# Change of Leaders

It's a common statement to make when we say, "Leaders change but Leadership continues."

July sees a change of guard in most places in Rotary. It is remarkable to see this change of leadership with smiling faces, great enthusiasm and with relief written on the faces of many who were leaders in the previous year but are now going to be followers of new leaders who take up the reins of their assignments with new dreams, new targets, new areas of involvement and renewed vigour.

What really does not change is the objective of Rotary, the aim of service, the commitment to improve our efforts and the resolve to improve our services, our image, our area of activities and our compassion.

When a new leader takes over at the club level or the district level or at the level of Rotary International's highest office, there are new ideas, new thrust areas, new directions, new dreams and new commitments. These, in turn, re-charge our batteries, re-define our priorities, re-emphasise our thrust areas and re-mould our plans and projects.

Leadership in Rotary is very different from leadership in all other spheres of our lives. It means more losses than gains, more hard work, more sacrifices, more sleepless nights, more financial obligations and more commitments to a cause that never disappears. We give much more than we have given before and may receive much less than what we expected. In spite of all this Rotary leaders take up their jobs with smiles on their faces and pleasure in their hearts. "To give is to receive" is best amplified by Rotary. What we receive is happiness, satisfaction, recognition and peace of mind. Rotary leaders never rue their role and always remember with nostalgia their year of a Rotary leader with satisfaction and pleasure.

Rotary leaders change every year but the progress of leadership towards the twin objectives of service and peace remain unchanged. It is the change of leaders that transfuse new ideas and create new roads to reach our objective. Physically Rotary leaders change; mentally leaders become rejuvenated to pursue their goals. It is this unique procedure of changing our leaders each year that is responsible for our achievements and our reputation. May Rotary grow stronger, wider and deeper into the hearts of the communities to reach the pinnacle of success. Let the communities believe and understand the role of Rotary and let every one say-Yes! Rotary Shares — as Rotarians care and follow the motto of Service Above Self. Have a wonderful year full of service.

# Assimilation needs special efforts

Rotary is an organisation that thrives on innovative ideas and challenging tasks. Passing through the early years of our second century we realise that unless our strengths are improved and augmented, we will fall behind the aspirations of the communities we serve. We therefore need greater strength — and our strength are our Rotarians.

Trying as hard as we could, we find that we have not made any progress in the number of Rotarians worldwide and we are stagnating at around 1.2 million Rotarians for more than the past 4 years. The reason is not far to see. We may add a good number of new Rotarians — through existing clubs and formation of new clubs — we might lose as many, if not more. A large percentage of this loss is, perhaps, avoidable. The strategy will have to lay more stress on Retention and Assimilation than on adding new members. Much more energy, effort and dedication are needed for this than for proposing a new member. Each club will have to establish a “Membership Assimilation” committee and ensure strong assimilation. It is clearly brought out that a majority of Rotarians leaving Rotary do so because they have not been involved in Rotary service as they feel outsiders. No intelligent man or woman would suffer in silence at being ignored or bypassed.

Rotary assimilation is a process that needs special efforts — not only of the club leadership or the proposer but also of each and every member of a club. There may be some resistance from new members who joined Rotary without realising their obligations but efforts in bringing sweat to the eyebrows or even tears in the eyes must not be spared to ensure success — and this needs extra dedication of existing Rotarians.

And finally the area where we can improve is induction of ladies in Rotary. India is doing well in inducting ladies in Rotary but we could do better.

Fortunately, the average age of a Rotarian indicates that membership of younger Rotarians will rule the Rotary world and this is a positive feature of membership growth.

The vital goal of more young, female and assimilated Rotarians will ensure a stronger organisation with a will and capability of performing all those challenging tasks that we are capable of and what our community expects us to excel at. This is the immediate challenge of the first decade of the second century of Rotary.

Our world leader Wilfrid Wilkinson is extremely interested in membership, and its impact on the success of Rotary. He expects at least

6,000 net growth in membership in India. This will be possible only if you all support and promote membership in your respective clubs. To promote membership development, RI President Wilfrid Wilkinson has specially organised the Presidential Membership Conference in Chennai on December 4, 2007. All of you should be there.

Focus on the need for change offers practical ways to increase membership, retain existing members and extend Rotary through new clubs. Share the magic of Rotary by inviting new members in the year 2007–08.

# Let Rotary Share its Dreams with the Youth

Rotary has a never-ending romance with the Youth. For over four decades, Rotary has pledged its strength to serve the Youth.

Rotary cannot survive in isolation. Many of the great success stories in Rotary and even out of Rotary were due to synergistic action of many. Rotary has the interest of the New Generation in mind because Rotary will be ruled by men and women of the Youth Brigade. Youth brings a whiff of fresh air into the working of Rotary. Youth also brings new ideas, new dreams, new ways of combating crisis and new ways of addressing various problems. I am firmly of the belief that Rotary gets more mileage out of youth than vice versa.

I would not insult the wisdom of Rotarians to tell them how to nurture youth, motivate youth, guide youth and sustain their interests. I would only plead that we use one of the most priceless resource we have — the New -Generation — for the betterment of the community and for the progress of Rotary.

I am reminded of the words of Daniel Webster, “If we work upon marble it will perish; If we work upon brass, time will efface it; If we rear temples, they will crumble into dust; But if we work upon immortal young souls; If we imbue them with high principles — the just fear of God and the love of fellowmen; Then we engrave on these tablets: Something that will brighten all eternity.”

Let us work on these young immortal souls. Let us work for and with our youth. As we work hand in hand with the youth on their favourite projects we must also remember the slogan — “Every Rotarian an Example to Youth.” And you can set an excellent example if you: “Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, at all the times you can, to all the people you can, so long as you can, with as many as you can.” Let us do all good to the youth while reminding them that “what they are is God’s gift to them, but what they make of themselves will be their gift to God.”

True, the stresses and strains of modern day life and the fast lane in which we are all travelling makes it difficult for Rotary to attract youth to the arena of service but there are many methods that have successfully evoked the interest of young men and women in Rotary. Our Rotaract and Interact, our Youth Exchange Programme and our GSE teams, our Scholars and our youth oriented programmes such as RYLA have all succeeded in attracting youth to Rotary. Let us devise some new ways of telling the youth that we care — we share their enthusiasm, their ideals and their goals. There is much to share and since, ROTARY SHARES, let us all share our dreams with the Youth and their dreams with all Rotarians. Rotary will continue to be relevant even in the third century of its existence — of this I am sure.

# Vocational Service - The Soul of Rotary

All of us actively practiced vocational service before we became Rotarians, or else we would not be in Rotary. We were selected because our club friends were convinced that we are competent, trustworthy, fair and honest people. All we need to do is to maintain the faith our fellow Rotarians have placed in us by precept.

In fact every Rotarian does vocational service more than any other service because it is the service we render to the community, to the competitors, to the clients, to the workers, to our colleagues through our business or professions. If we are reasonably honest, fair, straightforward and helpful to the community, we can be proud to say that we practice vocational service for about 8 hours daily.

Just imagine the genius of Paul Harris when he wrote — Each Rotarian is a connecting link between the idealism of Rotary and the idealism of his trade or profession. This link must be fortified. By working hard, by working well, by working honestly, by working without greed, by working for profits without profiteering, by working with a sense of “service” to the community, our simple and immensely difficult duty in vocational service is performed. You, you alone, can do it. If we can take stock of what we did through the day, at the end of the day and if we can, without violating the “inner voice,” say with conviction that we behaved as we ought to, we have written a word or even a sentence in the “History of Service.” May be one day, by many such writings by many Rotarians, we can write a paragraph or even a chapter.

This is the most important facet of vocational service — Individual action. The other facet of vocational service is Corporate action — with the efforts of the club members to produce something visible — projects that illustrate our concern for vocational service. Career-guidance, parental guidance, entrepreneur development, healthy employer-employee relations, promotion of vocational skills, recognition of vocational excellence, consumer awareness and guidance are some of the vital areas where Rotarians have been active and have shown exemplary devotion.

There should be no quarrel whether Rotary should promote individual action of Rotarians or promote corporate projects of the club. We must hold both ends of the chain. Individual action and corporate projects are equally valid and necessary. The more difficult of the two is individual responsibility and under the guise of doing much under corporate projects, we tend to conveniently neglect our personal responsibilities. Therein lies the tragedy. We have to bear the burden of our responsibilities eight or more hours a day, most days of the week, throughout our life and we have to bear it ourselves.

Remember that Rotary is judged by the quality and reputation of the men and women in Rotary and this almost entirely depends on your personal integrity. That is the most invaluable vocational service you can do — maintain integrity.

# Let Rotary Share its Desire to Promote Peace

Peace is not only a frame of mind, yours and others, but is a technique. You need to learn the technique of promoting peace just as a child learns the technique of walking or a musician learns to play an instrument.

This process of learning is not taught in schools and colleges (except for the colleges of peace in some Universities). This fundamental knowledge is essential if we were to succeed in promoting peace. The key word for promotion of peace is Action. You cannot just relax in your armchair to promote peace. Yes, you may feel peaceful but that is all. Peace is a two way lane. You have to meet others to instill in them a desire for Peace. Peace is such a rare commodity because many of us do not want peace or want peace on our terms. This is the biggest cause of friction and peace becomes so hard to achieve.

Many have lost pleasure in action. They want to relax by a pool side or have a week-end retreat or take a small vacation. This is lack of action and cannot ensure peace. In order to feel peaceful, these events may give you tranquillity but Rotary wants to spread tranquillity all around the globe and this needs action. People have stopped enjoying action. Rotary must make "action" a fashionable word again.

What does this "action" mean? This action means active participation in all programmes that promote understanding, compassion, acute desire to be at peace with oneself and with others and belief in Peace. As often said "We have learnt to walk on the moon but we don't talk to our neighbour. We have entered and conquered outer space but fail to enter the heart of neighbours."

Your one step to do so may seem, at times, futile, but if you continue to do so, the possible response will come sooner or later. Man does not understand man. Man has a fanatic desire of spreading his interests to all others. This has resulted in all failures to ensure Peace. The road ahead is strewn with obstacles but unless efforts are made in right earnest, with right compassion and adequate humility, the future will remain bleak.

Let Rotary show the way. Let Rotary show its keenest desire to promote peace. Let Rotary take as many steps as possible towards others to convince them that you are truly wedded to Peace and all you are asking is for a friendly hand to meet yours, a friendly smile to match yours and a friendly attitude to promote brotherhood. Once you can achieve this, even in a small percentage in the communities, the chapter on "Success to Peace" will be stored and one day, we hope, this chapter will be completed and eventually a book will be in our hands.

The only way to Peace is be Peaceful. Be an active promoter. Be tolerant. Be ready to offer your hand first with a sincerity that cannot be misunderstood. Peace is never a matter of thought; peace is never a matter of desire. It is not a matter of conviction only. It is also not a matter of action only. It is a matter of commitment. If it were only conviction and action, failure would result in depression and loss of faith. Unless you were committed, you would not try again and again to ensure peace and failure would not deter you to give up the efforts. Rotary has committed itself to peace and therefore will, one day, see the light of serenity and tranquillity that are precursors of Peace.

# Business with Ethics

Ethics or loss of ethics? The question is very relevant today. We live in the midst of great technological advances, great progress in many spheres of life and yet we seem to be losing out to dishonesty and lack of ethics. This can destroy all that we have achieved.

You cannot be ethical without being honest. Business needs ethics. Society needs ethics and without the force of self restraint which ethics wields, both of them would be let loose. The unique contribution of Rotary to the world of thought and practice, therefore, is the recognition of the fact that Ethics is the foundation of business, Business is the foundation of Society and Business with Ethics is service to Society.

Rotary claims to stand upright for honesty. Do we? It is ironic that in this age of great advances, we are travelling the other way as far as ethics are concerned. No development can survive if honesty starts disappearing. Rotary works for Peace and peace is at stake as we tend to overlook honesty. Why is it so difficult? Because honesty begins with us. Ethics depend on us. Individuals can only promise ethics. There is no path to honesty. Honesty is the path.

Are we ethical? It is impossible to answer the question but I have a suspicion that the answer may be somewhat negative. True, in today's world hundred percent ethical behaviours may be almost impossible and hundred percent truth may be a mirage. The only solution is to start becoming a more ethical person. If every Rotarian takes just a step or two towards honesty in all the dealings and behaviours, it would be a tremendous gain. Many a times, we ignore the philosophy behind our 4-Way Test. It is indeed highly valuable ethical yardstick still applicable in today's world. Using The 4-Way test as a guide line, we can improve ourselves and become better persons.

How do we begin? It has been rightly said that mankind must put an end to dishonesty, or dishonesty will put an end to all that dear to us. Let us begin, therefore with even a small resolve to be more honest or ethical. A former State Governor of Maharashtra Shri Prakashji once said "I may give bribe to a railway official for a railway ticket to procure the ticket if my son is seriously ill and is in a hospital. But I can always practice the motto: I will never take a bribe" Is this not illustrative? If every Rotarian can take but one step towards more ethics, the results would be phenomenal. We can, then, turn into our colleagues and business partners, our customers, our agents and even our community and exhort them to be more honest than they have been. One step at a time can make a world of difference. Let us walk this path — together.

True, honesty and ethics are like stars. You will not succeed in touching them, with your hands but like travellers of the journey in deserts our water, you choose them as your guides and following them you will reach your destiny.



# Public Relations

If Rotary has survived for more than 100 years, survived two world wars, survived major threats to Peace, survived depressions and survived competition it is because of one single factor — people need Rotary. People rely on Rotary. People have faith in Rotary. May be we could do much more, may be we could be a stronger force, may be we could grow phenomenally, may be we could be global but the fact remains that for an organisation not only to survive but also to grow numerically and geographically, we need the support of the community in which we exist.

This does not mean that we have been totally accepted, totally believed in, totally admired. No! We have a long way to go but we are on the right direction. What we need is a little more speed, a little more volume, a little more recognition and a little more community partnership in service. What we want, we can achieve through more effective public relations.

Public relations is not merely wearing a Rotary lapel pin in public, in fact not too many do this. Public relations is not a few photographs in newspapers or a write up of your club's activities. We have some success in this field.

Public relation is recognition by the community and cooperation by the community to fight problems with greater vigour, with greater success and with greater sense of involvement. The visibility of Rotary in the community is vital. The visibility of Rotary in conquering major problems of immunisation, health, environment, drug abuse, AIDS and many others is essential.

But, then, an individual club is unable to fight these problems. It has only local problems to fight. Rotary's involvement in local spheres of service is therefore equally vital—in fact I believe that this is more vital. The role of a Rotary club in promoting Public Relations is intimately linked with its effort to serve the needs of the local community in addition to contributing its mite to serve the needs of the global community. What is needed, therefore, is an enthusiastic and informed membership. Rotary is also judged by its individual members. A Rotarian who is known in the community as a 'good' man or woman, a Rotarian who is considered by the community to be reliable, honest and dependable will bring glory not only to himself or herself but also to Rotary. And these good, reliable, honest and dependable Rotarians should communicate with the community and tell them that they are Rotarians, that Rotary has many more of these 'good' people whose primary concern is the need of the community.

We may need professionals to promote public relations but what we need more are Rotarians who individually and collectively project to the community that they care, they are available, they are concerned and they are trying to help.

Of course we need professionals to do the things right but we need Rotarians to do the right things first. On that depends our credibility in the community that Rotary Shares.

# Rotary can make a difference in the world

A British newspaper once asked its readers, "What is wrong with the world?" One of the letters it received was from the famous writer, G K Chesterton. His answer to the question was very short. It just said, "I am." The world is dangerous not because of those who do harm but because of those who look at it without doing anything. Are you ready to make a real difference in the world around you? Am I...?

The power to make a difference lies within each one of us. If our faith is strong and constant, our effort to make a difference will be more than what we ever thought possible. All we need to do is to act as if our desires were already realities. To make a difference does not mean making a big splash or doing something that makes people yell "Wow!" Some people proudly call it 'leaving a legacy.'

Making a difference is doing ordinary things differently. Are you willing to help a needy child overcome the obstacles of poverty through a sponsorship? Can you put aside your indifference as regards those underprivileged and approach the HIV / AIDS affected with a little more compassion? Have you ever thought of providing education to those children who are still out of school? Have you ever considered those children who die each year from curable, infectious and parasitic diseases such as diarrhoea, malaria and tuberculosis?

Mother Teresa, was once asked "What is the secret of your success? Is it hard work, dedication, ability or discipline?" She smiled and said "It is hard to say, but one thing I know, I love to serve — I love to give and if you give yourself, life will give you back something to cherish. You can make a difference in this world."

If we can share the tears of the lowly, we will soften our hearts, wash our eyes and clear our vision. They in turn, will witness our selfless desire to be of help. Most of the have-nots are generally afraid to put their faith in the offers of help because many of them have an ulterior motive. They have selfish reasons to offer assistance. When they realise that Rotary is different. Rotary is serious, Rotary has no axe to grind — that Rotarians can share tears and fears — then they give total co-operation, unstinted faith and enthusiastic response. Never be afraid of tears that you share with others. It is the best cleaning fluid ever.

Rise in the eyes of the community by sharing your time, energy and resources and make them know, 'Yes, Rotary shares, Rotary can make a difference in the world.'

Remember, to the world, you may be just one person. Yet, to one person, you may be the world! Let your presence in the world be one that radiates love, peace and happiness and in turn let the world speak for you!

# God Loves a Cheerful Giver

RI President Wilf Wilkinson has exhorted us to share Rotary. “Rotary Shares” appears to be very easy to understand and yet the very simplicity makes for the danger that it may pass through one ear and come out from the other. This brief but telling slogan must be digested slowly and completely.

Is “Rotary Shares” a call for increasing the basic membership of Rotary Clubs so as to enhance Service? It may seem so, but in fact it means more than increased membership. Rotary shares not only Rotary with non Rotarians to bring them into our fold but also shares the ideals of Rotary and the “heart” of Rotary. What is this “heart” of Rotary? The heart of Rotary is the involvement of Rotarians, who through compassion and dedication try to bring sunshine into the dark lives of the unfortunates. One individual Rotarian may not have the strength to brighten their lives but many more members together can surely achieve this.

Rotary Shares also its dreams, its aspirations and its compassion with the communities, with the families, with other Rotarians and with new members. This will elevate the role of Rotary as a leader in the field of Service. Rotary, in turn, will produce many more effective and efficient leaders to carry the torch of Service.

Have you ever realised how rich you are without possessing even a paisa? Start counting your blessings and you will be amazed to know the alabaster of goodness and potential within you. Yet, none of these is yours because they are meant for others. Do you give them to others while you are still alive?

Today, we live in a society where focus is placed on getting things for oneself. But we forget the fact that life in abundance comes as the result of giving ourselves to others. As long as we give, we also receive. “We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give” reminds Winston Churchill.

Giving frees us from the familiar territory of our own needs by opening our minds to the unexplored worlds occupied by the needs of others. Whenever blood stops flowing, it begins to coagulate and to clot. In the same way, our life loses its vitality and meaning when we cease to give ourselves to others.

In fact, the most valuable things we can give are non-material things like a smile, a compliment, a prayer, love, caring, attention, affection and aspiration. These are some of the gifts you can give which do not cost you in terms of money. It does not exclude us helping people also with material goods. Always give with the right attitude and with generosity, for God loves a cheerful giver.

# The Name “Rotary” should become a Trade Mark of Service

What is an image? It is a reflection of what we are. What are we? Are we compassionate? Are we caring? Are we concerned with the problems of others? Are we strong enough to tackle some of these problems? Are we united to take action? Are we recognised by the community as an effective tool to answer some of their demands? Are we capable to help? Are we changing with the changing needs? Are we geared to respond to new challenges? A possible answer to many of these questions and some more is what Rotary should show as its image.

Realising that the needs are immense and never ending, Rotary can do so much more. If this dictum is explained to the community that needs assistance, we will be able to project Rotary as an instrument for addressing some of the demands.

The image of Rotary depends on the men and women and our children which constitute the workforce. A community being helped by Rotary may not necessarily interpret the wheel of Rotary as the force but will always recognise the men and women, who came to their help. Thus, every Rotarian is an example of love, helpfulness, care and concern.

There are over 95,000 Rotarians in India. There can, therefore, be around 400,000 people in our workforce. These soldiers of our force should try to project Rotary as the banner under which this help is coming. These volunteers of service may be regarded as the working hands of Rotary but Rotary's ideals should also be highlighted. The name “Rotary” should become a trade mark of service. If they can recognise names such as Coca Cola or Gillette or Cadburys or Nike or Reebok or Bata, they should also recognise Rotary as a trade mark of service — compassionate service, service with no axe to grind, service with a smile, service with propound dignity and service with commitment.

Once our trade mark “Rotary” becomes as famous and as acceptable to the community, Rotary can spread its wings and soar into the skies with great accomplishments. The name “Rotary” and its emblem “The Wheel” should generate positive feelings in the hearts of all those who need assistance. If this is achieved, Rotary will reach the pinnacle of existence.

Rotary Shares its wealth — human wealth in the form of its members and their families and financial resources — with the communities that need assistance. Once this is achieved, Rotary can share its ideals, its goals, its objectives and even its weaknesses with the community which will understand that Rotary is not “Superman” who can fight all evils but that Rotary is made up of humans with many limitations. But within its scope, Rotary can surely be “Superhuman” with commitments that are beyond the expectations of the needy. That is our strength.

Let us project this as our image.

# Rotary Proclaims “Service Above Self”

Our scriptures proclaim again and again that doing good to someone, who needs this good, is in itself a recognition of your kindness. We do not have to look for recognition from others. Yes, recognition may come, rewards may accrue, awards may be presented, but the real award is the smile on the face of the recipient of your service or the gratefulness expressed by the needy or merely an expression on the face which speaks more than all the words of thankfulness put together.

A young girl of nine comes with her three-year-old brother to join a play group. When someone asks “Your brother must be a little heavy. Don’t you feel the burden?” She replies “Burden? He is no burden. He is my brother.”

Do Rotarians consider service as a burden which needs to be paid back in terms of rewards? Do you consider it as your duty? The answer will clearly demonstrate the mind frame of a Rotarian.

Gandhiji, Martin Luther King and many great men have exhorted us that you are being rewarded for helping others by being the instrument of God. You should be grateful to the community for giving Rotary a chance to be helpful. As is commonly proclaimed “Hands joined in a prayer are not as effective as hands stretched out in service.”

Sir Winston Churchill was the chief guest at an award function to present an award to a Britisher, who went out of his way to save a community threatened by a calamity. When asked why he consented to be the chief guest at this function for recognising a common man, he said “Excellent works by good people are more vital and satisfying than good work by eminent people. To the community, such ordinary people are more precious than people like me and I must recognise these extraordinary people.” Reward to this Britisher came from the people he saved and the presentation of a citation by Winston Churchill was merely an icing on the cake — a bonus.

Rotary proclaims “service above self.” Rotary promotes service to others. Excellence in our pursuits of services in itself is a reward. When you help someone in need, you receive two rewards. Firstly, the reward of a smile on the face of the recipient and secondly a “nod” from God saying “well done.” It is this nod that gives you immense happiness, great satisfaction and sound sleep, which is not the result of a sleeping tablet. God has many ways to reward your efforts to be helpful and receiving an award from someone is not in this list. Let us all share Rotary and share the glory, the satisfaction and the happiness that comes out of service with no strings attached.



# About the author



**Rtn. Ashok Mahajan**  
**RI Director 2007–2009**

Rtn. Ashok Mulkraj Mahajan, member of Rotary Club of Mulund, RI District 3140, Mumbai, India has been involved in Rotary since 1973 and has risen from an ordinary member to the coveted position of RI Director 2007–2009 by his commitment to the Rotary movement. He was the President of RC Mulund in 1982–83 and District Governor, RI District 3140 in 1993–94.

Born on July 23, 1947, he graduated with a Bachelor of Engineering degree from the Bombay University with distinction and then took a Diploma in Operations Management and Business Management from the Bombay University. He now runs an industry for manufacturing electrical and electronic components.

He has been RI President's representative to District Conferences many times and was also appointed as the Zonal Coordinator for Membership Task Force in 1995–96 and again in 1998–99.

He is associated with the National PolioPlus Committee for over 10 years and also served as the Zonal coordinator for Avoidable Blindness Task Force during 2000–02 and was a member in the India Presidential Polio Plus Summit 2001–02. He represented RI District 3140 at the 2001 Council on Legislation, Chicago.

Rtn. Ashok Mahajan was conferred with the Distinguished Service Award, Service above Self Award, Regional Service Award for a Polio free world and the Golden Century Award. He is a major donor to TRF, benefactor and a member of the Paul Harris Society.

Rtn. Ashok Mahajan enjoys reading, cricket and social service.