

## ॥ ‘Ātmajñāna - Āyurvedajñāna Yajñas\*’ ॥

[Spiritual Retreats as ‘An Interwoven Confluence’ of Two Yajñas] for:  
Atma-Prasannata, Atma-Jnana; Ayurvedajnana & Arogyakshema  
Acharyas Conducting the Yajñas:  
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### A Comprehensive Picture of the Yajñas in 22 Sections:

#### 1. The *Atma* as the ultimate Divinity in the *Vedic* Tradition:

Throughout the ages, the spiritual luminaries of *Bharatavarsha* [*maharshis, acharyas & avatars*], notwithstanding their adherence to *widely different darsanas* [‘world-views’, or specific schools of philosophic thought]; unequivocally concurred with each other, when it came to the recognition of the *Atma* [Self] as the ultimate Divinity, that was enshrined - in the *sanctum sanctorum* of man’s consciousness - or, put differently, ‘just behind’ the mask of his self & personality. There was never any serious divergence in their view, when it came to this fundamental question of the *Atma* as the ultimate Divinity and refuge - for both distressed souls, ‘ensnared by the world’, as well as for mature seekers [*mumukshus*] on the spiritual paths of *Dharma & Moksha*.

#### 2. Imperceptibility, Intangibility & Inaccessibility of the *Atma*:

Nevertheless, the imperceptibility, intangibility and inaccessibility of the *Atma* to our all too limited instruments of cognition [the senses & consciousness] have always stood like insurmountable mountains in the way of the *meditative-introspective discovery of the Atma*. ‘Discovery’

\**Yajna*: Meaning ‘sacrifice’ or ‘self-abnegation’. Used here in the sense of the ‘self’ being offered as a ‘sacrificial oblation’ into the fires of *Atmavichara, Atmajnana & Ayurvedajnana*.

in its customary usage, only pertains to external objects, which the senses are capable of apprehending. Here, as the *Atma* is not certainly an external object, the two qualifying adjectives had to be brought in, to emphasize this newer connotation of 'discovery' in the internal realm.

The above difficulty is actually rooted in *the default setting of our instruments of cognition - in the outwardly-turned direction*. It is for this very reason that without *firstly pacifying & later reversing this default-setting through the yogic sadhana of Pratyahara* [withdrawal of the senses from their external sense-objects], the meditative-introspective discovery of the *Atma* may well become nothing more than a utopian mirage. Why, even the spiritual life, may not be considered to have really taken birth, *if this default setting is not pacified & reversed* - as the first, and probably also, as the last important step in the spiritual life.

### 3. Untrammelled Freedom to Pursue a New Line of Enquiry: Intrinsic to the *Vedic Traditions of Advaita & Atmajnana*:

The untrammelled freedom to boldly pursue a new line of enquiry, especially when it is emerging like a blossoming lotus, under the stimulus of the brilliant rays of the *Atmic Sun*, from the still lake of one's convictions & inclinations - is such an inherent predilection of the *Atmajnana* tradition - that it also resulted in the creation of a number of alternative approaches for grasping this ultimate *Atmic Reality*, through such newer religious conceptions as: *Sat-Chit-Ananda, Aum, Paramasiva, Paramatma, Parabrahma, Mahavishnu, Isvara, Purushothama, Siva, Brahman, 'Tat'*, and so on; depending upon the *darsana* to which any specific *Vedic* school of enquiry subscribed.

In view of the already existing difficulties arising from the imperceptibility & the intangibility of the *Atma* to the instruments of our sensory perception, *this newly emerging diversity in the approaches and nomenclatures*, only resulted in a further thickening of the cloud of confusion, thereby making the *meditative-introspective discovery of the Atma*, an even more confusing proposition, if not a well-nigh impossible spiritual attainment.

#### 4. 'Meditative-Introspective Discovery' of the *Atma*:

Against the backdrop of this ancient *Atmajnana* tradition, with its underlying predilection for untrammelled freedom in the pursuit of a bold line of enquiry, in tune with one's innate inclinations & convictions; the present *Yajna* directly address the spiritual goals of self-knowing & Self-Realization, and offer a time-tested path leading to *the meditative-introspective discovery of the Atma* - as the timeless, formless, attributeless, imperceptible Divinity, underlying man's all too limited body & consciousness. Thus, the *Yajna* will be seen to show the way for securing the blessings of *Atmajnana* [consummate clarity in the Understanding or Realization of the *Atma*] & *Atmaprasannata* [tranquility & imperturbability of the self, because of the consummate clarity in the Understanding of the *Atma* & Reality].

The excessively outward movement of the senses, due to the pursuit of their external sense-objects-all for the gratification of the little 'self'; together with the chattering that is going on all the time in our consciousness; has denied our human family, the simple blessings of attentive listening & motiveless action. As *Atmaprasannata* settles, a new feeling of intensity blooms, in which the seemingly insignificant acts of our day to day life, such as bathing, drinking a glass of water, or feeding a hungry animal, or listening to a stranger, all acquire a new intensity in 'being', unknown to the old ways of our sensory gratification.

#### 5. The Confluence of 'Ayurveda & Atmajnana' in this *Yajnas*:

The imperceptible *Atma* is deeply nestled in the *sanctum sanctorum* of man's sense of self, i.e.; within his 'I', but is enveloped by the *Pancha-Kosas* [five successive 'sheaths', or coverings]: (1) physical body [*Annamaya Kosa*], (2) vital sheath [*Pranamaya Kosa*], (3) emotional sheath [*Manomaya Kosa*], (4) perceptual sheath [*Vijnanamaya Kosa*] & (5) 'blissful being' sheath [*Anandamaya Kosa*].

Because of this quintuple encasement, the meditative-introspective discovery of the *Atma* will happen more easily and powerfully, *not only when the default setting of the senses and consciousness is firstly pacified & subsequently reversed, but also when the encasing Pancha-Kosas get purified, through the remarkable Ayurvedic insights, leading to the purification processes and dietary refinement.*

This is facilitated, **firstly through** systematic *Vedic* methods of enquiry [*Atmavichara*] into: the nature of the senses, the process of *Pratyahara* [withdrawal of the senses from their sense objects, etc], the process of observation of *what is*, the *Panchabhutas*, the self & the world; *and secondly also through a parallel profound Ayurvedic understanding and care of the Annamaya Kosa, through the balancing of the Tridoshas, the purification of the Pancha-Kosas, the Panchapranas, etc.*

The confluent entry of *Ayurveda* into our unfolding total picture at this stage is quite apt, because *Ayurveda* [along with *Yoga*] probably has the subtlest understanding of the spiritual potentials inherent in man, and provides us with that subtle knowledge of the *Pancha-Kosas*, of how these may be awakened & kindled by such purificatory processes, so that the higher ideal of the **spiritual well-being** of man is achieved, once his **physical well-being** has been attended to & completed.

More significantly, over the last three decades, Ayurvedic physicians world-wide have been dedicating themselves to the more easily understood goal of the **physical well-being** of man, through the powerful *Ayurvedic* methods of purification and rejuvenation - after the physical body has suffered a functional breakdown in one or more of its organs. In this *Yajna*, however, *Ayurveda* contributes [whenever the *Ayurvedacharya* Dr Sunil Joshi, taking a break from his busy commitments, is able to join hands with me] in two distinct ways.

Firstly, by throwing *Ayurvedic* light on how, **physical well-being in itself**, impacts beneficially on the **spiritual well being** of man. Secondly, by opening new *Ayurvedic* doors to a higher spiritual life, by the careful

purification and rejuvenation of the *Pancha-Kosas*; so that, *Atmaprasannata*, which is an acknowledged milestone in the spiritual life of *Dharma & Moksha*, and to which man is eternally entitled, merely by being a healthy human, is achieved, as a ‘natural state’. **The Ayurvedacharya, Dr Sunil Joshi, who is internationally renowned as an authority on Ayurvedic Panchakarma**, has contributed enormously to both aspects of *Ayurvedic* purification & healing, pertinent to the spiritual life.

#### 6. *Ayurvedic* Vision: Physical, Vital & Emotional Planes-as ‘Sheaths’ Impacting on Man’s Spiritual Life:

The *Yajnas*, would naturally lead us in a step by step manner into the higher spiritual spheres of *Dharma & Moksha*, *spheres in which we are not likely to do well, if we do not have sufficient sensitivity and care of our bodies-from this arises the relevance and enormous significance of Ayurveda even for the spiritual life.*

If the sensitivity of the philosopher-master J. Krishnamurti to the body, in the spiritual life is anything to go by [he had a guiding Ayurvedic Physician by his side for no less than three full decades]; a testimony to this effect may be cited in the foreword to ‘Krishnamurti’s Notebook’: “**Indeed, he looks after the body, as a cavalry officer would have looked after his horse.**”

What lesson do we learn from this? **The body is important, for the spiritual life [but without a sense of identity with it], perhaps more so, than it is for mundane life;** for in the spiritual life, it must be maintained in a highly *sattvik* & sensitive state, for only then does it become easy to meditatively discover the *Atma-our spiritual Home, our Self, even our God & Guru, who are but the Atma, externalized & objectified.*

#### 7. **Beyond Belief & Faith is the ‘Meditative-Introspective Discovery’ of the Atma:**

It must be understood that in these *Yajnas* one is not certainly trying to inculcate any religious belief or faith in the *Atma, nor is one*

even attempting to give knowledge about the *Atma*. For at best, such belief & faith, and even such knowledge, may only serve as limited stepping stones, leading to the final meditative discovery of the *Atma*, and once this happens, *as a consequence of Pratyahara and the introversion of consciousness to a sufficient degree*, then unshakable conviction with regard to the existence of the *Atma*, and one's ultimate identity with it will spontaneously come into being, which, after all, is the much longed for fruit of *Atmajnana* [Self-Realization].

8. The ultimate Divinity also manifests as an *Ishtha Devata*, under certain astrological conditions, which create both *Bhakti* as well as the *Ishtha Devata* - as an 'objectified form of the *Atma*' - as an 'External' Deity:

This ultimate Divinity of the *Paramatma* is moreover, also well-known to respond in a supremely compassionate manner to man's sense of self, whenever the latter is in a state of utter helplessness, *and more astonishingly, under certain well-known astrological conditions*, the *Paramatma*, entering into a mystic communion, also oversees and draws close to man, becoming his *celestial beloved [Ishtha Devata]* in this process. Such blessings become man's lot, whenever he is fortunate enough to either abide in that state of devotional fervor, or in *aloneness* or, even in the unruffled state of the *Sthithaprajna* - as beautifully enunciated in the second chapter of the *Bhagavad Gita*.

Note however that in all these states, known in *Bhakti Yoga*, the 'duality & separation' between the devotee and his celestial beloved [*Ishtha Devata*] is sustained, *whereas in these Atmajnana Yajnas, the emphasis is not on the nurture of this 'sanctified duality'*.

9. 'Hindu Homecoming', also an Important Goal in these *Yajnas*:

More generally the *Yajnas* are also for building, cultivating, and fulfilling the spiritual life in the spheres of *Dharma & Moksha*, beginning especially with 'Hindu Homecoming', *a highly pertinent goal for modern English-educated Hindus*, as set forth in the Preface to my

book: *Sri Ramana Maharshi's Moksha*. Some of the *Yajnas* may strongly emphasize only the *Atmajnana* aspect, whereas at other times the *Yajnas* will have the confluence of *Ayurveda* into them, in which case, there will also be **the opening of new Ayurvedic doors** leading to the spiritual milestones of *Atmaprasannata & Atmajnana*.

#### 10. **Structure & Content of these *Atmajnana-Ayurvedajnana Yajnas*:**

In the spiritual spheres of *Dharma & Moksha*, there are traditionally different paths for grasping the ultimate Divinity of the *Atma*. There are paths of a predominantly devotional nature [*Bhakti Yoga*] or of a meditational nature [through *Patanjali's Yoga Sutras* or *Dhyana Yoga*]. Some others may also follow the path of *Karma Yoga*, namely selfless service, without expectation of any selfish fruits as rewards, while the more thoughtful and perceptive types, may adopt the path of study of the scriptures, reflection, contemplation, and this is the path of the present *Atmajnana Yoga*. From these basic paths, hundreds of other paths may also arise, when some ingredients of one path are combined with those of another and the permutations and combinations can eventually produce a very rich variety of paths—each ideally suited, however, only to people of one particular kind of mental makeup.

#### 11. ***Jyotisha* [Vedic Astrology] also has a Significant Place Here:**

*Jyotisha* has been long since recognized as *the eye of wisdom*. As far as I know, traditionally, one has not heard of *Jyotisha Yoga*, an approach to the Realization of the *Atma*, involving astrological understanding of human destiny, with the blessings of *Isvara*, juxtaposed with His wrath, combined with the already potent *Atmajnana Yoga*. However, the *Atmajnana Yajnas* here [or *Atmajnana-Ayurvedajnana Yajnas*], will also have the dimension of *Jyotisha*, but the central emphasis will be on *Atmajnana* [the path of Understanding] only, but with the recognition that with the emotional empowerment of *Bhakti*, and ***Ayurvedic Pancha-Kosa shuddhi, Atmajnana, becomes even more potent***. Though *Jyotisha* does not make a direct presence in these *Yajnas*, its *all seeing eye of wisdom* can nevertheless lay many ambiguous

matters to rest, much like the clinching verdict of the third umpire on the cricket field.

## 12. The Centrality of the *Bhagavad Gita* in these *Yajnas*:

To bring about this very subtle ‘Understanding’ [I prefer this term to ‘Realization’, as the latter is already loaded] called *Jnana*, the *Sutras* of the *Bhagavad Gita* will be extensively used, only because the *Gita* stands out as a *Moksha Shastra par excellence*, even though, traditionally, it has not been viewed in this particular light by many Hindu *acharyas*, past & present.

Rather than our present reliance on the *Bhagavad Gita*, one could have also relied on one or more of the *Upanishads*, or on the *Brahma Sutras*, or on the traditional *Advaitic* texts, such as *Vivekachudamani*, *Vedanta Panchadasi*, *Tripura Rahasya*, *Ashtavakra Gita*, *Ribhu Gita*, *Yoga Vasishtham*, etc; but the *Bhagavad Gita* was what Sri Bhagavan had initiated me into, rather early in my life and it was also the *Shastra*, that came to be internalized, after I crossed sixty, so it will eminently serve our present purpose, **because it is indeed, also the condensed milk-essence of all the *Upanishads*.**

## 13. A New Modern Commentary on the *Bhagavad Gita*:

In the traditional *Bhashyas* [commentaries] on the *Bhagavad Gita* [and there are a number of excellent *Bhashyas* each having their own characteristic merits], **one rarely ever sees the light from the wonderfully potent teachings of such modern Advaitic Masters of the last century as Sri Ramana Maharshi, Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj and Sri J Krishnamurti - used for bringing home the truth of the *Bhagavad Gita*, in a more lustrous way** [none of them is any more on the physical plane].

These *Yajnas*, not only open new doors for *freshly rediscovering the ancient Advaita tradition of Atmavichara & Atmajnana*, but will also do full justice, to the teachings of the beloved *Advaitic* Masters, J Krishnamurti & Nisargadatta Maharaj, as I do not see these priceless modern teachings **standing alone, away from the *Gita***, in spite of such an

uncompromising stand having been taken by the two beloved Masters themselves, in the course of their lifetimes.

There are two aspects of the *Bhagavad Gita*, to which we must be particularly sensitive, by way of preparation for these *Yajnas*. Firstly, the teachings of the Gita are sometimes a veritable *Dharma Shastra*, and sometimes a veritable *Moksha Shastra*. A good scholar would know when the teaching is running on the *Dharma* plane and not on the other. When a *Mumukshu* takes up the Gita, he will be primarily interested in it as a *Moksha Shastra*. At this point we may note that *Dharma Shastras* are more widely read, whereas *Moksha Shastras* remain in the background, because of their esoteric nature-they appeal only to *Mumukshus* [seekers after liberation], who are generally a meagre minority. On account of the unwavering dedication of the Hindus [and even many non-Hindus, in fact] to the Gita, ever since *Adi Sankaracharya*, culled it from the *Mahabharata*; the *Dharma* aspect of these teachings has for the reasons mentioned above attracted wider attention than its esoteric *Moksha* aspect. We have to bear this fine distinction in mind, as we are presently coming home to this teaching, for what it has to offer, as a time honored *Moksha Shastra*.

Secondly, whenever a seeker, whether Hindu or not, approaches the Gita, he necessarily sees ‘**Two Lights**’, a brilliant one, emanating from the illustrious Divine personality of *Bhagavan Sri Krishna*, and certainly, another distinct Light, **but of lesser luminosity-in the eyes of devotees**-emanating from the Gita, the teachings of that *Bhagavan*. Mature devotees, who may be small in number compared to the vast majority, may however see only ‘**One Mass of Light**’, rather than two, standing for **the indivisible unity of Bhagavan Sri Krishna and his teaching, the Bhagavad Gita**. The majority of devotees, contrariwise, through their excessive devotion may not pay so much attention to the Gita *per se*, as to His lustrous Divine personality, in which they may get engrossed through their devotional approach. Krishna himself says: ‘among all the seekers and devotees, the *Jnanis* [men of Understanding] are most beloved to Me’. In the present *Yajnas*, we are not really

obsessed with the Divine personality, **as much as we will be with the teachings of that Divine personality**, and this clear preference for one aspect of the *Gita*, over the other must certainly be noted.

#### 14. **The Advaita Tradition & the Present Vein of Atmajnana Yajnas:**

Between the three illustrious *Advaitic* Masters of the last century, mentioned above, barring *Sri Ramana Maharshi*, who chose to teach predominantly through the time tested *Hindu Advaitic* scriptures; the other two, **breaking with the traditional line**, brought in a radically new approach, each inimitable, each brilliantly original & profound, each direct & radical, *yet nevertheless, each also cut away from the main stream of the Vedic tradition, because of the critical stands both took, with respect to the timeless tradition.*

After observing closely these three illustrious departed Masters of the last century, and studying the traditional texts carefully, and watching also the course of development of my own **Master Sri Bhagavan's** mystical-devotional movement, which is not also overtly aligned with the Hindu tradition; **I settled into the unwavering conviction, that I should basically keep walking on the broad highway of the Atmajnana tradition**, but at the same time would retain my integrity, by not turning my back, **either on the wonderfully potent teachings of the two beloved Advaitic Masters, who chose to decisively break with the traditional line**, or on the priceless wisdom communicated to me, directly from his *Atma* by my most beloved *Master Sri Bhagavan*, through hundreds of hours of *upadesa*, since my boyhood days.

#### 15. **Devotional Adoration & Gratitude to the Four Beloved Masters:**

To all these four beloved Masters, I will bend my body & head in salutation a million times, again & again, as I still do on a daily basis, only to discharge at their Divine feet, the ever gushing stream of devotional adoration & gratitude, for providing me that dependable life-boat of *Atmavichara*, with which I had, a number of years ago, already made a safe landing *on the blessed farther shore of Atmajnana, only to*

*make the paradoxical discovery, that this shore had always been my everlasting Home, from which I had never really strayed - except for those occasional, 'delirious & mad journeys in thought', propelled alas, by the Divine Mother's mandate of Maya, during which periods alone, I naturally felt Homeless, listless and lost!*

*Advaitic Upadesa & Atma Prasannata:* Without the magnificent boat of self-knowledge [*Atmavichara*] provided by my Master Sri Bhagavan and the *upadesa* from the three Advaitic Masters Sri J. Krishnamurti, Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj & Sri Ramana Maharshi, I would not have reached the blessed shore of *Atmaprasannata*, within my own bosom.

#### 16. *The Vedic Darsana: Atmajnana & Ayurveda:*

*Atmavichara, Atmajnana, & Ayurveda* as presented in the Hindu scriptures, offer a world-view [*darsana*], so vastly different from our modern one, which is based on the physical-biological sciences and on cosmology to a certain extent. In such a modern world-view, there is indeed no place for the *Atma*, much less for an ultimate Divinity, deeply enshrined within the consciousness of man. And at any rate, there is no room for the primacy of consciousness, or any room for sacredness at all.

For these reasons, and also because we have all been brought up on that strict intellectual diet of the modern world-view, we will take time to become free of the fundamental assumptions of the sciences, which are spiritually crippling, as they uphold *Maya* or the Reality of the external world, as though it existed quite independently of the observing subject. In truth, without the observing subject, the world, considered utterly objective in the sciences, would not exist at all - for does not the world exist in our consciousness only? A human observer is always needed to observe this world, thereby becoming a witness, for validating the existence of the cosmos. The catch is just here, and tilts the verdict

decisively, in favor of an observer-dependent subjective cosmos, thereby establishing the primacy of consciousness.

### 17. Preparations & Qualifications-for Securing the Blessings of *Atmaprasannata, Atmajnana, Ayurvedajnana & Arogyakshema*:

We may however note in passing that the actual attainment of *Atmaprasannata, Atmajnana; and the fruits of Ayurvedic purifications & rejuvenations* would depend upon a number of necessary preparations & qualifications, such as the following:

(1) Firstly, to have the perception that something is fundamentally amiss in man's consciousness, which is at the root of all of man's ills. From such a perception might arise the sincerity, patience & dedication to 'heal and restore that consciousness' to its pristine purity. Each seeker must be actually willing to walk on the road himself as no one else can do this introspective enquiry for him.

(2) Devotion to *Ishtha devata*, either as *Atma*, or as a Deity, beloved to us, representing *Isvara* or the *Atma* [in other words, *Bhakti*, as it is quite natural to perceive the *Atma* also as 'the other', 'the Beloved', rather than as the 'Self', especially when *Pratyahara* has not reached *yogic perfection*].

(3) Ideally, surrender either to the *Atma* or to the *Ishtha Devata*, or to *what is* [in J. Krishnamurti's sense], resulting in a readiness to understand and accept what destiny has to say, with regard to the benevolent or malevolent consequences of 'The Mood of *Isvara* at the time and place of our birth, as an embodied *Atma*' [this is the real meaning of our astrological chart], for the possible fulfillment, or even for the lack of it, in the pursuit of these sublime goals - through either *Isvara's* blessings or His wrath, now, or even at any later time in life.

(4) Ideally, detachment from sense-objects [resulting in inner tranquility].

(5) **Willingness to renounce the ego**, in the day to day transactions with the world.

(6) **Serious enough** to enter into the process of *Atmavichara* without any vacillation and come on the path of self-knowing. **If we were fickle, and frivolous in our approach, or too restless, we would not be able to get into *Atmavichara*.**

(7) **An interest to understand deeply**, be introspective and stay with *what is*-as all these are necessary preludes to self-knowing & Self-Realization.

#### 18. **The Seekers Who May Benefit from these *Yajnas*:**

1. Distressed people in search of inner tranquility as an antidote for inner conflict, confusion, loneliness, fear, ‘wandering desires’, grief & turmoil. However, such distressed people should be free of chronic mental sickness and should not still be suffering from depression, or mental ill-health.

2. Seekers with faith, who are in search of true answers for their questions pertaining to their baffling life situations or their enigmatic destiny.

3. Seekers with faith, who wish to build their spiritual life on the path of *Atmajnana Yoga* or who wish to deepen their existing understanding of *Hindu Dharma & Moksha, Ayurveda, so that, they may thereby secure the benefits of Ayurvedic purification and revitalization, for a more lustrous spiritual life.*

4. Hindu & non-Hindu devotees, who wish to assimilate & internalize the Hindu scripture: *The Bhagavad Gita*, or those who, being already very familiar with the *Bhagavad Gita*, may now wish to go for an internalization of the teachings in the *Gita*, in their day to day life.

5. Broad-minded devotees of God who, though already walking on other spiritual paths may nevertheless be open enough to look for genuine answers for their still unanswered questions outside their particular faith or path.

6. Those who are searching for a reliable means to find meaning in *Sanatana Dharma* [Hinduism] and who wish to make *Sanatana Dharma* ‘come alive’ in their day to day life. Likewise, seekers who are searching for ways and means of bringing *Ayurvedic* wisdom and knowledge into their day to day life, for improving their physical health, and their spiritual well being, as a consequence.

7. ‘**English-educated Hindus**’ who feel they have ‘lost’ their ancestral religion and are therefore now seeking to regain these lost spiritual treasures [‘**Hindu Homecoming**’] by a kindling of their interest in the *Bhagavad Gita, Atmavichara, Ayurveda & Jyotisha*.

8. **Seekers already on the paths** of *Dhyana, Bhakti, Karma, or Patanjali’s Yoga*, because they now wish to broaden and enrich their understanding by integrating *Atmajnana Yoga* [through the *Bhagavad Gita*] into their existing spiritual path.

9. **Mumukshus (spiritual seekers)** who are of an independent temperamental make up and are therefore on the lookout for a trustworthy means to work out their own *Moksha or Atmakalyana*.

10. **Equally, also for non-Hindus [especially Western seekers]**, belonging to other religions & spiritual traditions, but who may be in genuine search of either *Atmaprasannata or Moksha* and who are sincere and dedicated in their quest. **They may be particularly attracted to *Atmavichara, Atmajnana, Ayurveda or Jyotisha*.**

19. **Benefits Accruing to the Participants: *during the Yajna:***

Depending on the intensity of yearning, sincerity & openness to learning; participants, may expect to receive the following benefits.

1. **Relying on *The Bhagavad Gita* as the guiding light, how, *one may actually enquire into, understand & practice observation of oneself & the world; practice withdrawal of the senses from their pursuit of sense-objects; and in this way, through the appeasement of extroversion, come***

*upon the meditative-introspective discovery of the Atma, with the concomitant priceless blessings of Atmaprasannata & Atmajnana.*

2. Learning, understanding & applying selected *sutras* from *The Bhagavad Gita*, to our day to day problems, thereby securing the keys for eliminating conflict in life, & thereby awakening intelligence, which is sourced in the *Atma*, the ultimate Divinity.

3. Enquiring into pleasure & pain, understanding, bondage & freedom, nature of Reality, *and in this way, allow feeling, sensitivity & intelligence to awaken.*

4. Devotional feeling for & ‘Understanding’ of *Ishvara* through the teaching of *The Bhagavad Gita* - as the Supreme ‘External’ Deity, the ‘objectified form’ of the *Atma*, the ultimate Divinity. Learning and cultivating devotion to this ultimate Divinity. Learning the way of renouncing the *ahamkara* [sense of individual body-centered self], and cultivating the spiritual life in the spheres of *Dharma & Moksha*.

5. Insights of *Ayurveda* into the physical & spiritual potentials of the human body, grasping an *Ayurvedic* understanding of *Prakruti, Vikruti, Trigunas, Tridoshas, Panchabhutas, Panchapranas*.

6. Understanding the importance of ‘balance’ & *shuddhi* [purity] of the *Panchakoshas*, & the *Saptadhatus*, & *understanding how modern excessively extroverted life styles, destroy this balance and purity.*

7. Understanding how the *Panchakoshas* may be kept purified, by right diet, right exercise, right life style, right use of sense organs.

8. Finally, understanding the great therapeutic & spiritual value of *Panchakarma*, in cleansing & rejuvenating the body, understanding how *ama* is removed from the body by the *Ayurvedic* purificatory practices, & how all this results not only in sound health, but also in a robust *Atmaprasannata, & Atmajnana*.

20. Benefits Accruing to the Participants, *after the Yajna:*

The benefits already received during the *Yajna*, through intense learning & understanding of the inner life & the *Atma*, may be further consolidated in our day to day life, *by applying the sutras of The Bhagavad Gita [these are immensely potent 'precision tools', which were already received and even applied on the spot, during the Yajna] in our day to day life situations. In this way, the Atmajnana, imbibed during the Yajna will through the application to the baffling situations in our daily life, be transformed into fruitful Atmavijnana. Thus, we start sure-footedly walking on the path of self-knowing [Atmavichara], and work our way, through right understanding & insight, to Atmaprasannata and Atmavijnana [Self-Realization, applied fruitfully in daily living].*

This leap from *Atmajnana* to *Atmavijnana*, is much like the conversion of the 'raw' discoveries of Science, into the fruits of Technology, which alone are of unquestionable utility value in life. Such a transformation will naturally be self-paced, progress and results, depending crucially upon the individual's devotion, faith, sincerity, and eagerness to continue learning. The *Yajna* was intended to be a 'flying start', for such a pilgrimage into the spiritual life. If one is sensitive at all, a new life would bloom into existence in due course, bringing forth sensitivity, deep feeling & awakened intelligence, all of which are the varied fruits of *Atmavijnana*, arising from that well-spring of *Atmaprasannata, Isvarabhakti, & Atmajnana*.

After having learnt so much, from the *darsana of Ayurveda*, one naturally ought to have become highly sensitive, in the caring of the body, in keeping it away from abuse, by training & balancing it through the right life style, right diet, even resonating it, like a finely tuned instrument; *so that it will then be a more conducive vehicle for producing & sustaining the spiritual melodies of Bhakti, Atmajnana, & Atmaprasannata. In this sense, Ayurveda's confluence into the Atmajnana Yajna should have definitely opened new doors to these highest symphonies in the spiritual life.*

## 21. An Explanatory Note on the Name: Sankara Bhagavadpada:

In the *Vedic* tradition, it is common for a spiritual Master, or *Guru Maharaj*, to bless his disciples with new names, especially when those disciples have been initiated & prepared either through a *Samkalpa* or a *Diksha*, for carrying forward the vision & mission of that spiritual Master. The name, Sankara Bhagavadpada was given to me by my beloved Master Sri Bhagavan, through a *Samkalpa*, way back in October 1991, when his mission, made its first entry into the world, through my discipleship, as the *Paramacharya*, for Sri Bhagavan's mission. The change of name was published in the Tamil Nadu Gazette, dated Sept 6<sup>th</sup>, 1991. Indeed, this spiritual name may be considered by some discerning Hindus as carrying considerable significance, because it is known to be the august name of the historical *Adi Sankaracharya*, one of the illustrious *Acharyas*, & founding fathers of modern Hinduism, & the upholder of the philosophy of *Advaita* [8<sup>th</sup> Cent, AD].

My *purvashrama* name was Shanker Ramachandran, father's name being Ramachandran. After the blessing of *Atmaprasannata* settled on me in 1972-73, I remember clearly having unmistakably 'heard once', the sudden voice of 'an aspiration for an ancient name', which somehow, became endearing at that moment only. Thereafter, this was wholly forgotten. Nearly, twenty years later, when I was sitting silently in prayer, pausing for a few moments, before actually getting ready to sign my name, at the office of the Tamil Nadu Gazette, that old 'voice of an aspiration for an ancient name' was suddenly remembered in a flash. I was to know by this, that so long as we will be silent within ourselves [*Atmaprasannata*], without any mean craving, for the happiness of the imaginary little self, *Siva* Himself, will give a desire [which is actually *His Samkalpa* in disguise], and He will also bring His own *Samkalpa* to fulfillment, without our even waiting or longing for that to happen.

There has never been, at any level of consciousness, either an open or a secretive yearning, to be 'spiritually associated' with the ancient & illustrious *Adi Sankaracharya*. In fact, I thought to myself occasionally:

‘My father had the name of that illustrious *Avatar*, Ramachandra of *Ramayana* fame, and my mother, the name of that illustrious hill-top goddess in Vijayawada, *Kanaka Durga*; in fact most of the millions of Hindus also have hallowed & auspicious names of gods, goddesses, *avatars*, *maharshis*, *acharyas*, and in such a land, it may not be so extraordinary to bear the name of one of the great spiritual luminaries. What is extraordinary, however, is the *Samkalpa* of the beloved Master Sri Bhagavan’. This was my train of thought.

Strangely however, without my ever desiring it consciously, ever since I turned sixty, the call of *Advaita* became more persistent and irresistible, my first book was on *Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi*, to whose *Advaitic* attainment, my Master Sri Bhagavan, had introduced me as far back as 1964. So this journey on the road of *Advaita*, on which I now find myself briskly walking, seems to be what has been ordained by **Sri Bhagavan, my beloved Master** here, and by **THAT, Unknowable Siva Mahadeva in Kailasa**, beyond this world of ours. So I am just walking along on this road, with this awareness, but without the slightest feeling of any burden, that could arise from so weighty a spiritual name.

## 22. The Two *Acharyas* [Teachers] Who Conduct These *Yajnas*:

### **The *Ayurvedacharya*, Dr Sunil Joshi: M.D. (*Ayurveda*):**

The world-renowned *Ayurvedacharya* hails from Nagpur, from a family which has had a distinguished record of proficiency & commitment to *Ayurveda*, since generations, and this *samskara* is still **continuing**. He will teach how one may understand, care for, purify, heal, rejuvenate, and revitalize our body [*Annamaya Kosa*], and emotions [*Manomaya Kosa*] - according to *Ayurveda*’s time-tested profound *sutras*, and in this process, he will bring into full relief, the intimate connection of the *Annamaya Kosa*, and the other four *Kosas* [sheaths] to the *Atma*, the ultimate Divinity in man.



He will systematically unveil the constitution and dynamical action of the *Panchabhutas* [the Five Great Elements: Earth, Water, Fire, Air, Space], the *Tridoshas* [*Vata, Pitta, Kapha*], the *Sapta Dhatus*, and the *Pancha-Kosas* [already set forth], so spectacularly, that we will directly perceive the Intelligence of *Isvara*, at work in the mysterious human organism, through the bio-rhythms of the *Doshagati*.

In the next stage of his exposition, he will show the way for building and enjoying a superior physical, emotional and spiritual health, through the practice of *Ayurvedic purificatory* disciplines [*Pancha-Kosa Shuddhi*] and through *Ayurvedic* herbal elimination processes [*Panchakarma*], *yogasanas* and kindred treatments. In so doing, he will open for us, new *Ayurvedic* doors, into the higher realms of superior health [*Arogyakshema*], *Atmaprasannata*, and even *Atmajnana*. In this way, the profound *Ayurvedic* understanding and its relevance for sustaining and invigorating man's spiritual well-being will be brought to the fore by the *Ayurvedacharya*, thereby creating a conviction within

*us, to seek these salutary Ayurvedic purificatory processes, for the furthering of our spiritual life.*

Dr Sunil Joshi is one of the renowned Ayurvedic physicians of our times, with a practically world-wide presence. He has been practicing as a pioneering *Panchakarma* Physician since 1983 in India[at Nagpur] and outside India, in the US since 1992[at Albuquerque, New Mexico], and holds the record of having treated more than 25,000 patients through *Panchakarma* at his clinics in India and USA. Significantly, he has been on the clinical board as an advisory and faculty member of Dr Deepak Chopra's Wellness Center, in Sandiago, USA. He was also involved in research work on *Panchakarma* with Dr. Gabriel Cousins, MD, Arizona, USA.

Apart from these diverse clinical involvements, Dr Sunil Joshi, as an *Ayurvedacharya*, has been conducting Ayurvedic Courses in Europe, Affiliated to the EVIS, and at Durban, Johannesburg, South Africa, and even at Prana Centre, Costa Rica. He was a Key Note speaker in South West Yoga Conference in Austin, Texas USA, in 1999. In 1994 he was invited as a guest speaker at the world congress held in Washington DC by NIH on: *Sustainable Future of Alternative Medicines in the World.*

Dr S Joshi authored a book on *Ayurveda and Panchakarma* which was already published in 1998 by Lotus Press, America and reprinted in India in 1999, and in Italy in 2000, and the French edition is currently under print. He has also presented a series of workshops on *Panchakarma* in National College of Naturopathic Medicines, Portland OR, USA. Since 1990, he has travelled extensively in USA thrice a year for doing consultations, seminars and *Panchakarma* in ten states of the USA. There were also a couple of workshops in Columbia University, New York. He has given a series of lectures to the medical fraternity of Wittenberg University of Spring Field OH, and Wright State Medical University OHIO.

In 1993 was a Receptient of *Maharshi Annasaheb Patwardhan Award* in the name of famous *Panchakarma Physician Vaidya*

*Lavgankar Shastri* for outstanding work in the field of *Panchakarma* and being the youngest recipient of the prestigious award.

**Dr Shalmali Joshi, the *dharmapatni* [spouse] of Dr Sunil Joshi,** graduated [BAMS], from the Shree Ayurveda College in Nagpur in 1984, and like her husband, is also a practicing *Ayurvedic Vaidya*. She specializes in *Ayurvedic gynecology* and Women's Health and has been working with her husband in the field of *Ayurvedic Panchakarma* since 1987. Dr Joshi has also developed her own line of skin care products and is an expert in the field of *Ayurvedic nutrition*. She has been a visiting professor at the Dr Chopra Centre for Well Being in California. She has conducted workshops at the National College of Naturopathic Medicine, Portland, USA and at Columbia University, NY. She also presented an accredited programme for health care professionals sponsored by Wittenberg College of Nursing, Ohio State, USA. **She will be present at some of these *Yajnas*, supporting Dr Sunil Joshi's *Ayurvedajana Yajna* and in an advisory role, especially for women participants.**

### The Meeting Ground between the Two Acharyas:

A compassionate physician, Dr Sunil Joshi, has also been deeply, involved with the *Ramakrishna-Vivekananda mission*, as a *mumukshu* since his youth, and since some years also with my Master Sri *Bhagavan*. Last year, during my stay at his *Panchakarma* Clinic in Nagpur, I was overwhelmed, when I learnt from his staff, who administer *Ayurvedic* massages, that they were all instructed by Dr Joshi to the effect that, '*there are no 'patients' in his clinic, because all are only Atmaswarupis.*' From this small piece of insignificant information, we may understand the extent to which his heart is **involved in *Sanatana Dharma* and in his noble profession, of an *Ayurvedic Vaidya* and *Ayurvedacharya*.**

**The Impact of Dr Sunil Joshi and his *Panchakarma* Healing:** In 1998, after having studied *Ayurvedic* works in a preliminary way, I applied myself whole-heartedly to '*Ayurveda and Panchakarma*' by Dr

*Sunil Joshi*, to my complete satisfaction, and in July, 1999, took the *Panchakarma* treatment, from Dr Joshi at his *Vinayak Panchakarma Chikitsalaya [in Nagpur]*-as my pressing problem of *allergic bronchitis*, defied all solutions from the hands of allopathic physicians. *Fortunately for me, this 22-day Panchakarma treatment, gave me nothing less than a second lease of life, apart from making more lustrous my Atma prasannata, on the subtler spiritual plane.* I was overwhelmed by Dr Joshi's original, analytical understanding & diagnostic methodologies of *Ayurveda*, as well as by his tremendous sincerity and dedication to his mission. Since then, a strong urge arose in me to work closely with Dr Sunil Joshi, not only because of a 'soul affinity' with his *Ayurvedacharya*, but also because, I felt strongly, that one of *Panchakarma's* higher goals, should definitely be *Self-Realization* itself, which is after all the *Summum Bonum* of human life. To maintain a consistent phraseology, I would like to refer to all this as 'brilliant *Ayurvedic Light*', which cleansed my body this time, intensified *Atmaprasannata* and which was destined to come through Dr Joshi.

**First Dormant Call, Rekindled:** However, as, it was my destiny to have been drawn powerfully to *Jyotisha* [*Vedic astrology*] at that time; this 'first call', had to largely remain dormant. **Nevertheless, since getting back in touch with Dr Sunil Joshi in 2009, & finding my first call, which had remained all these years smoldering from within, coming under the powerful stimulus of a rekindling;** I now feel poised for what appears to be another new chapter of my life, one in which, I see myself collaborating with Dr Sunil Joshi, for the spiritual purpose of bringing seekers everywhere, closer to the final goal of life: *Self-Realization*.

**Confluence of *Ayurveda, Advaita Atmajnana & Jyotisha*:** I see this collaborative effort taking the form of a triple confluence of: *Ayurveda, Jyotisha [Vedic astrology] & Advaita Jnana*; with *Ayurvedic* knowledge and healing-for the express purpose of facilitating and fructifying, this larger vision, through its extremely sensitive methods of cleansing and purification of the *Annamaya, Pranamaya, and even the Manomaya*

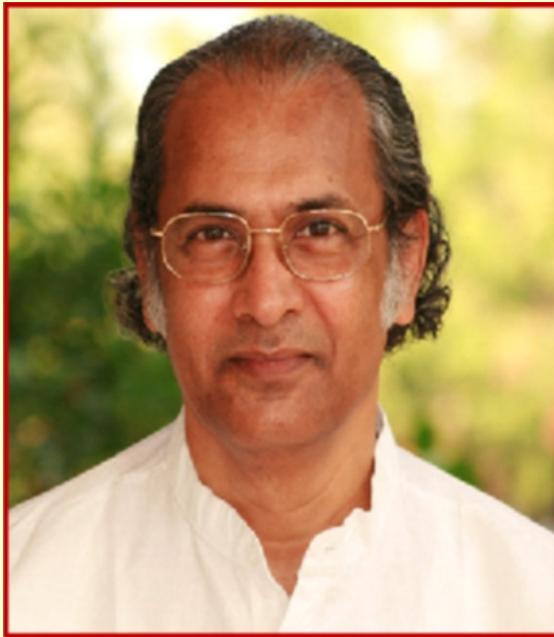
*Kosas*, and thus bringing the yogic ideal of *Atmaprasannata*, within the reach of modern man. *Ayurveda*, *Jyotisha* & *Advaita Jnana*, are each *darsanas* in their own right, but suited to the study of slightly different systems. They are almost like the ‘different faces’ of the same ‘Crystal’ of Eternal Truth.

I see the Ayurvedacharya Dr Sunil Joshi, contributing dominantly to the cleansing and healing of the *Annamaya*, *Pranamaya*, and even the *Manomaya Kosas*, through the two spheres of Ayurvedic knowledge & treatment, as well as *Advaitic* teachings; whereas, I see myself, contributing dominantly to the cleansing and purification of *Manomaya*, *Vijnanamaya*, and *Anandamaya Kosas*, through the two *Vedic* disciplines of knowledge: *Jyotisha* [Astrological understanding of human life], and *Advaita Jnana*. If this three-fold confluence, now seems within reach, it is only on account of the renewed association, with the eminent Dr Sunil Joshi, whose arduous work of Ayurvedic healing has already made a significant impact in several continents over the last 25 yrs, in the lives of many thousands of individuals, who have been fortunate enough to awaken to a startling new awareness of their bodies and minds, as fundamentally sacred creations of the ineffable Divine, as it revels in its beatific eternal dance.

### ***Acharya Sri Sankara Bhagavadpada:***

In the beginning, all seeking is directed outwards only, but when thwarted, it turns inwards, and will even finally subside, resulting in *Atmaprasannata*: By following the trail of ‘the brilliant Light’ from my Master Sri Bhagavan even in this sphere of life, I sought the mysterious truth of the *Panchabhutas* through research-studies in theoretical nuclear physics at The Tata Institute of Fundamental Research [Mumbai]; after completing the Masters in physics, from the IIT [Chennai, in 1971]. This sustained research eventually bore the fruit of the doctoral degree [PhD, 1979]. After all, are these not the typical pursuits, in which the senses & the intellect love to get engrossed? As the *karmic* momentum of this seeking, was still not fully expended, I continued research for another

two and a half years-I was in what was then West-Germany, at The Institute for Theoretical Physics, at the Wolfgang Goethe University of Frankfurt as an Alexander Von Humboldt post-doctoral research-fellow till late 1982; working there with Prof. Walter Greiner and Prof. C.S. Warke-my erudite mentors in science and my humane well-wishers.



### Introspective & Meditative Years:

This research work, during this period of a decade [1972-1982], which was also simultaneously, introspective & meditative [first period of sustained '*Antarmukha*'], was published in the form of ten papers in highly accredited International research journals in the field of theoretical nuclear physics. As an inevitable consequence of these introspective & meditative years, there was for me, at this stage in my philosophical-spiritual

development, the perceptible blessing of slipping into the *Sthitha Prajna's* state of *Atma Prasannata*, which resulted in my spontaneous withdrawal from my decade long academic pursuits, which were all centered on the outer world of the *Panchabhutas*. Having entered a beautiful new world, and wishing to introduce my fellow beings to this new world, I went back to my beloved philosopher-friend, [who had spiritually initiated me in my boyhood], and who in later years, came to be known as the Master Sri Bhagavan, with just this aspiration.

**The Master Sri J Krishnamurti:** In the early 1970s, in attempting to cope with a highly competitive modern world, in which no one paid any attention to the spiritual well-being of individuals, I underwent a radical change of heart, whereby my spiritual life and the aspirations of the deeper-self, took precedence over all other survival concerns. I was able to tide over this crisis-which was one of conflict between the spiritual-

aspirations of the deeper-self on the one hand and bread & butter concerns of a mundane world on the other-*by taking to heart, the teachings of the Master Sri J.Krishnamurti, for this is what I was asked to do, in that perilous hour by my philosopher-friend Sri Bhagavan.*

*Karma Yoga in the Mission of the Master Sri Bhagavan:* As a token of my abiding gratitude towards this philosopher-friend and Master, I felt morally bounden to serve this Master, for that blessing of the *Sthitha Prajna's Atma Prasannata*, which I secured as a result of turning inwards and watching the 'self' at work and as a result of taking to heart the *upadesa* of this beloved Master. Thus I served the Master Sri Bhagavan, as a completely self-less *karma yogi* for seventeen long years.

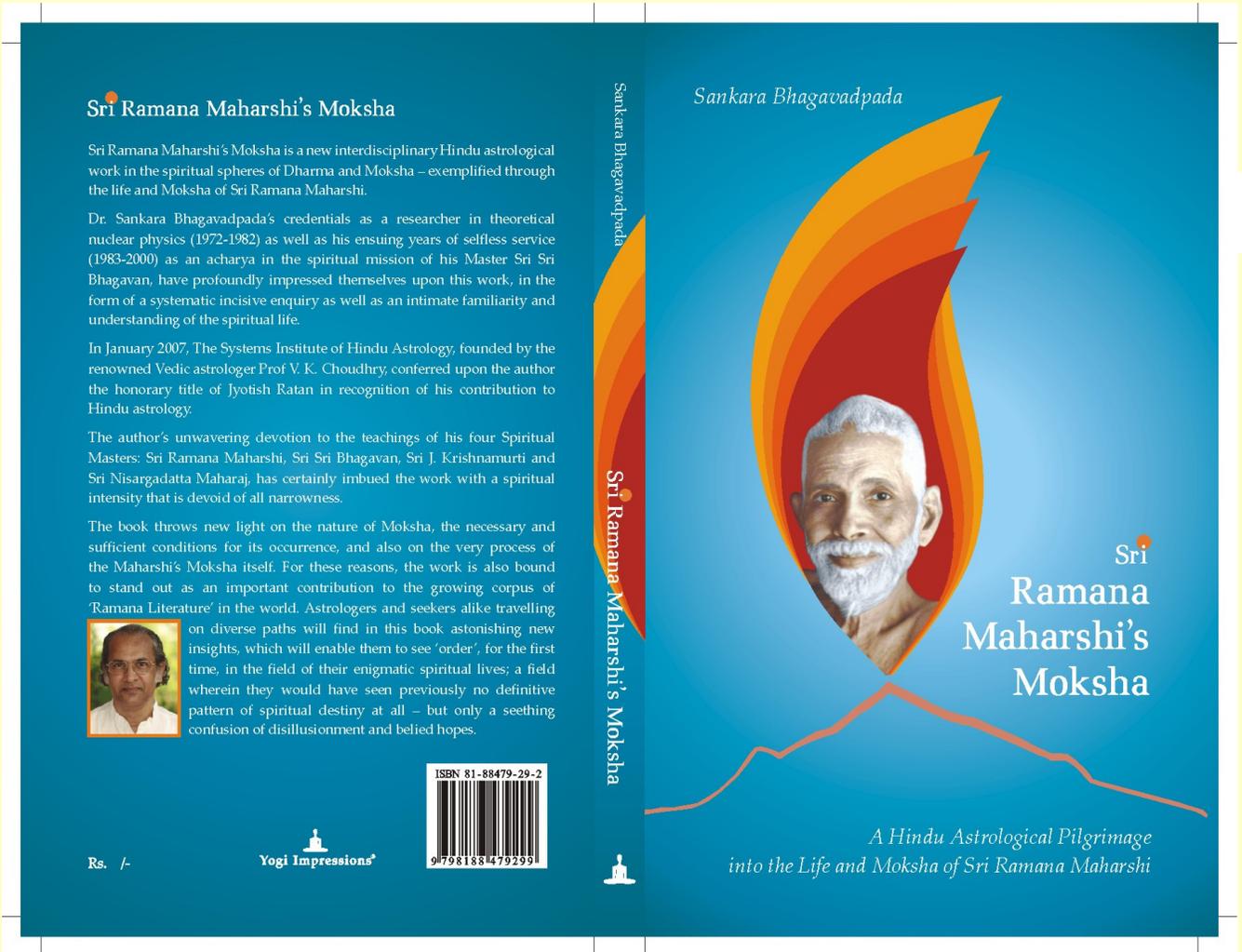
*Second Period of 'Antarmukha' [1999-2011]:* Thereafter, watching my Master's growing spiritual mission steadying itself firmly on its own feet; in 1999, I withdrew fully from an involvement in my Master's mission work and has been, since then responding to a new inner calling – *Advaita Jnana & Vedic Astrology [Jyotisha]*, for which I have also had my Master's blessings in sumptuous measure.

*Study & Research in Jyotisha [Vedic Astrology]:* Among the *Jyotish Acharyas*, who had given me 'brilliant Light' in the pursuit of astrological knowledge & wisdom[either directly through their teachings or through their writings], are foremost, beloved Prof. V.K. Choudhry, followed by the writings of many ancient & contemporary *Vedic* astrologers, especially those of the *Vedacharya, Pandit Vamadeva Shastri*. In the last twelve years, my learning and research has been in the spheres of *Advaita, Vedic Astrology & the Systems Approach in the four spheres of Artha, Kama, Dharma & Moksha*. In February 2007, 'The Systems Institute of Hindu Astrology' under the chairmanship of Prof. V. K. Choudhry conferred on me the honorary title of '*Jyotish Ratan*', 'in appreciation of my meritorious services, towards the cause of Hindu Astrology'. Since March 2006, every year, I have been presenting my astrological work in the spheres of *Dharma & Moksha*, at the Annual

International Astrological Conferences in Gurgaon, India; under the chairmanship of Prof. V. K. Choudhry, and organized by the International Institute of Predictive Astrology [IIPA], Fairfield, USA.

**‘Sri Ramana Maharshi’s Moksha’**: Using a judicious combination of *Vedic* Astrology and the Systems Approach, I have presented much of my new astrological research in: **‘Sri Ramana Maharshi’s Moksha - A Hindu Astrological Pilgrimage into the Life and Moksha of Sri Ramana Maharshi’**, which was published by Yogi Impressions, Mumbai, in Mar 2009.

At the present time, I am offering selective *Vedic* astrological consultations [in person, and on the net], for all the four spheres of life, from my home in Chennai [since 2003]. Since a year, I have also commenced teaching an interactive ‘Course in *Vedic* Astrology’, through e-mail lessons. I am a *grihastha* [house-holder] living with my wife, Dr Prema Shanker & my daughter, Gayatri Shanker in Neelangarai, in the outskirts of Chennai. **Sri Kannan Subramanian** has been offering me excellent secretarial support in my *Vedic* astrological & spiritual work as a self-less *karma yogi* for the last twenty years, for which I would like to record here my warm-hearted acknowledgement, gratitude and appreciation.



For further administrative information on the '*Ayurvedic Panchakarma*', you may turn to:

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