

Testimonial for the Courses offered by Dr. Sankara Bhagavadpada:

I. Atmajnana and II. Vedic Astrology

Working together with Dr. Sankara Bhagavadpada has definitely been a life changing transitional event for me and radically changed the way of how I am approaching life. He constantly inspired me to think and experience for myself and not just to believe and take things as given.

After having been traveling throughout around 60 countries, climbing 6,000 meter-high mountains and diving down to 40 meters into the ocean in search for new experiences, through the help of Dr. Sankara Bhagavadpada I came to an understanding that happiness and contentment is something we can not find outside in the external world, but only deeply within ourselves through knowing of who we really are.

Dr. Sankara Bhagavadpada guided and accompanied me on my numerous travels to other realms of consciousness and higher understanding by introducing me into the Samkhya philosophy of creation and by sharing many extraordinary philosophical concepts with me that today form the foundation of my thought, perception and feeling process. I am infinitely grateful for having the blessings of receiving the wisdom from probably one of the most outstanding and at the same time most humble spiritual teachers of our time.

Additionally, my special thanks also goes out to Ricardo Bravo who had introduced me to Dr. Sankara Bhagavadpada after sharing his knowledge with me for many years. Ricardoji introduced me into the art of deep contemplation and self-observation. Through Dr. Sankara Bhagavadpada I received the philosophical tools so necessary for knowing our Self.

But what is this Self?

I. Atmajnana – From *self*-Knowing to Self-Realization

Through the teachings of Dr. Sankara Bhagavadpada I came to an understanding that we are carrying two Self's within our physical body. Our true Self (soul or atma), which has always been there, observing, and which is never changing; and our false Self (ego or ahamkara), which is changing and fluctuating over time and which is influenced by our conditioning and sense perceptions. During the last 5 years I had been working with Dr. Sankara Bhagavadpada. In many conversations he had been guiding me through the process of identifying, understanding and silencing the false self by making use of our intelligence (buddhi) and finally helping me come closer to my true Self and what I really am.

Self-observation over the years has been bringing at least the theoretical understanding that everything passing through our mind is an object that somehow will affect our perception and feelings. As a result we may conclude that we are not what is passing through our mind and such may have huge implications of how we are approaching our life. Our thoughts are not our thoughts; our feelings are not our feelings; and our emotions are not our emotions; therefore we are theoretically entirely free and can become aware of who and what we truly are. “Tat Tvam Asi – That thou art (You are that)” – The eternal Jiva that observes all activity.

What can this understanding mean for our daily life?

We live a healthier life, because the Jiva (soul) is free of disease as it is a fragment of pure consciousness (purusha).

We are able to create stability inside our mind, as we are able to observe whatever is moving through it and affecting our manas (thoughts, feelings, emotions).

We may come to an understanding that impressions are received through the five senses into our consciousness, are interpreted by manas and condition our mind by repetitive actions and behaviors (samskara). Such understanding allows us to integrate and heal unresolved imprints from the past. Furthermore, it helps us to create a sharp awareness of what we allow to enter into our consciousness. It makes us the master over our own conditioning and helps us to avoid living our lives as blind slaves to our own desires, temptations, pleasure seeking and sense fulfillment.

Conscious transmitting of objects to the intellect buddhi is possible, which allows us to pause before reacting through discrimination and taking responsive, wise decisions and actions. By this means we can avoid the creation of many artificial problems during our life, preserve our health, relationships, and save a lot of energy and eventually also money. To some extent we may even be able to consciously create our karma.

The mind transcends and dictates all sense perceptions once it is in a sattvic state. Such a mind is entirely clear as it serves the Jiva and is not controlled by the objects that are affecting its consciousness. As long as the mind is dominated by sattvic qualities and not by rajas and tamas, health and happiness are guaranteed.

Being sattvic makes us more intelligent through the upward movement of buddhi, gives us more clarity and makes us more effective. Tasks can be realized effortless. We become flexible, peaceful, connected to our heart and our true Self, develop self-love, true love for others, compassion, caring, present and respond adequately.

Through observing our mind, thoughts, emotions and feelings, we are able to identify what brings us bliss and what results in suffering and pain for ourselves and for others. We understand to which elements inside our mind we have become attached (affinity) and what form of relationship we have created. We become fully aware, concentrated and awake and have the freedom of choice what we allow our conditioned mind to receive. We can eliminate any mind trap we have created for ourselves, or which has been imposed on us by outside conditioning. We can actively choose a sattvic diet, lifestyle, environment, job, activities, and so on. We are choosing what sense impressions we take in, how we process them and how we express our response to each intake. *We can actively avoid the registers that are burnt into the software program of our conditioned mind, which in the future would enslave us otherwise. To some extent we can give our life a certain direction through free will and free choice once we have freed ourselves and burnt off our past (life) karma. Through such an awareness drug addictions, depressions and in some cases even stronger diseases may be overcome.*

When the mind rests in peace (sattva), speech and action become more silent and less new karma is created.

In case we really manage to live the above said and convert theory into praxis, some very few may be able converting themselves into so-called self realized persons and cross over to a state of dharma and moksha – the liberation from the sense of “I” / false Self / Ego / Ahamkara.

“The Truth is beyond thought, concept, and conditioning and this Truth is what you are, and only the Truth is.” (Sri H.W.L. Poonjaji)

“Tat Tvam Asi” - “You are that”

What?

A drop of water (Jiva) of the vast ocean of pure consciousness (purusha).

How to get there?

In order for this to happen some have suggested to stop searching, studying and practicing and to just BE.

A Being – Ser - Sein

II. Vedic Astrology

During the now 8 year lasting quest of Self exploration my external world had been changing entirely and the storms were not only a few. Crossing the bridge onto the “path” towards our true Self in the beginning has not been an easy thing. *A bird in a cage eventually may feel like this, when suddenly he is able to leave his prison but then is finding out that he is actually afraid of flying.*

Fortunately, there are some great tools and wonderful teachers available in order to undertake this exciting life journey. *Self-realization and the quest for dharma and moksha have been described in the scriptures as life's ultimate goal within our current incarnation after having enjoyed the illusionary fruits of material sense gratification in previous periods throughout life.* Tools such as yoga, meditation, astrology, ayurveda and plant healing may be enriching for the before mentioned quest and may help a seeker to spiritually develop.

Following a summary of my understanding with respect to Vedic Astrology as a tool of healing the way Dr. Sankara Bhagavadpada had taught me.

The spiritual quest usually starts through some life-changing event in the form of a crisis. So the first important step to get things back to normal and eventually coming on the path, is to recognize and be aware that something is not going good and that we are facing very likely at least a small crisis. This status is the “What is”. This is what is happening in just this present moment. *Usually we make the mistake through the wrong use of our false Self (ahamkara) to try to live in the “What Should be” meaning we are trying to run away as fast as possible from the “What is”, because we want to avoid suffering and pain.*

However through the movement of the planets and their energies sometimes it is just impossible to run away. There are times we consider to be good and times we perceive of being not so good. The whole creation is based on positive and negative impulses. Day and night, light and dark, etc. A good way to face difficult moments is to remind our Self that the good and the bad are both an inevitable part of creation. *The not so favorable times help us to reflect about our Self, about our circumstances, about our actions from the past, their effects in the presence, help us to grow, to blow off our Karma and to create spiritual awareness.*

Through the Devas-Asuras Model, Dr. Sankara Bhagavadpada had taught me, that benevolent and malefic life energies are always present in every moment of our life. Sometimes the benevolent energies are pulling the rope stronger and sometimes the malefic planets win the battle over our consciousness. The key is to become attached neither to the good nor to the bad events, situations, emotions or thoughts, but just to observe them. The way to face difficult situations is to become conscious about the “darkness” and by bringing light onto the dark or unpleasant areas. Such areas will be processed and integrated, or lets say healed.

This can be done through simple meditation, meaning just sitting comfortably and still, closing our eyes, focusing on our breath and observing our thoughts, sensations and feelings in the body. If we observe closely without thinking and analyzing, just purely observing, we will find out in a later stage the adjustments that need to be done. *So the idea is to become aware and conscious of our feelings and thoughts, our situation and the “What Is”.*

The Astrological birth chart contains the mood of God at the moment of birth. Depending on the planet constellation we are exposed to certain energies that are benevolent or malefic for us in certain life areas at specific points of time. Through our birth chart we may be able to understand the karma we have to resolve from previous incarnations and with whom.

Usually we live unconsciously and are not aware of the energies we are exposed to. As long as we are not being challenged or not having a crisis, we do not feel the need to reflect about our Self and our situation. Therefore the first step is to become aware of our situation. This process has been described before. *This is very important, because often we are having a crisis, but are not even conscious about it.*

Most people have lost their spiritual connection and only are asking for help from something bigger to them, once the crisis is getting out of control and the suffering becomes unbearable. It is when things are not going well, that our Faith is tested at the hardest. Unfortunately most of us have lost our faith or even never had faith.

If Astrology is used as a tool of healing in order to find a way out of a crisis, we need to have faith or at least make an effort to restore our faith. The planets are nothing else then a representation of God, because everything is one and everything comes from the same source. Ultimately even we ourselves are a manifestation of the divine and finally our true Self (atma) and God are the same thing.

So-called Remedial Measures, when performed seriously, help us to find out which planets and energies need to be fortified and which planets need to be pacified. Ultimately they help us to restore our faith in the divine and most important in ourselves. Remedial measures sort of help us to restore the imbalance temporarily been created on our karmic bank account. When applied in a preventive way, otherwise difficult life circumstances may be softened in a way that greater damage will be excluded.

After we have understood the Remedial Measures and we decide to apply them seriously and with faith, our Intentions (Samkalpas) will materialize more easily. The idea of Vedic Astrology is to observe certain live areas and use our power of consciousness in order to integrate what has become unbalanced. The tools of such power of consciousness are righteous thought, feelings, imaginative pictures, words and deeds. Expressing and writing down our intentions (samkalpa) is another powerful tool.

Using Astrology in order to find an auspicious time window for important undertakings is another important tool (Muhurta). Personally we made use of this tool by asking Dr. Sankara Bhagavadpada to determine an auspicious wedding date.

As a result I am eternally grateful to Dr. Sankara Bhagavadpada for sharing his wisdom and knowledge with me. The course is structured in a way, that the interaction is completely individualized, meaning anyone can study at his own pace and capacity of understanding. Dr. Sankara Bhagavadpada always has responded in a very short period of time to my never-ending questions. He is one of the most pure, upright, honest and compassionate people I have come across. He always generously shared his teachings and never judged anything personally I was sharing with him. His patience is extraordinary. It is a blessing and an honor to have found such a great teacher and friend, with whom I was able to share my flights to other dimensions of understanding and perception. Thousands of hours of conversations were the trigger for many hundred documented pages. While visiting him and his wife Dr. Prema Shanker in India, both were very loving hosts, introduced us into the Indian way of living and took us to some great sights.

Thank you very much for sharing Jyotish, the art of seeing through.

May the divine always bless you and your family!

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