

11. Vedācārya Pandit Vamadeva Shastri

On the astrological side, the present work is based on the astrological systems developed by two contemporary *Jyotiṣācāryas* [sanctified teachers of Hindu astrology or its more ancient version of *Vedic* astrology], who have each shaped my astrological thinking and clarity in their respective domains. Firstly, Pandit Vamadeva Shastri, a renowned *Vedācārya*, created a version of *Vedic* astrology (VA) in the spiritual spheres that served to kindle my deep interest in this discipline.

There were, however, many areas in VA that were confusing on account of the conspicuous lack of consensus among various *Vedic* astrologers and the lack of self-consistency as well as reliable predictive accuracy. Contradictions arose when the astrological *sūtras* came into conflict with real life events and situations that they were expected to accurately describe and predict but were unable to (*Systems Approach* 55). Otherwise, the many spiritual insights of Pandit Vamadeva Shastri's VA provided an initial satisfaction for my soul, which had become thirsty for the waters of this astrological knowledge.

12. Professor V. K. Choudhry

As I continued to struggle with the areas of uncertainty in VA, I stumbled upon what I still consider to be nothing short of 'gold' in the astrological terrain: I am referring to the monumental ground-breaking work in the form of the Systems Approach to Hindu astrology (SA) developed by Professor V. K. Choudhry, one of the most creative and original living *Vedic* astrologers of our times. The uneasiness

and the well-concealed frustrations that characterized my state prior to coming upon the SA completely vanished, and there was the light of clarity through the use and application of the powerful, completely self-consistent analytical methods of the SA.

However, this newer system of Hindu astrology (SA), in the first instance addressed the problems pertaining to the



The Vedic Astrologer Prof. V. K. Choudhry

material spheres of *Artha* [achievement of professional goals and the acquisition of wealth defined in the most generalized sense] and *Kāma* [marriage, family life, pleasure seeking, enjoyment, desire fulfilment, will, and aspiration], only because in the eyes of the founder, fulfilment in *Artha* and *Kāma* was a necessary prelude to the serious commencement of the spiritual life in the spheres of *Dharma* and *Mokṣa*. It is held in the SA that the first spiritual goal is the attainment of inner peace and contentment, which will then serve as a natural stepping stone for entry into the higher spiritual realms of *Dharma* and *Mokṣa*. We may mention in

passing that Prof. Choudhry has repeatedly emphasized the importance of astrologers observing Divine conduct in their lives.

By blending the analytical and predictive tools of the SA with some of the spiritual insights of Pandit Vamadeva Shastri's VA in the spheres of *Dharma* [spiritual learning at a teacher's home in ancient Hindu society, now replaced by modern secular education in schools] and *Mokṣa*, I have endeavoured to study astrology rather comprehensively in the spheres of *Dharma* and *Mokṣa*.

I am, therefore, indebted to both the *Jyotiṣācāryas*, Pandit Vamadeva Shastri and Prof. V. K. Choudhry, though in the case of Pandit Vamadeva Shastri, the inspiration was necessarily indirect, coming from his extensive writings; whereas I had the liberal blessings of my Spiritual Master *Śrī Śrī Bhagavān* for learning and imbibing the SA directly from Prof. V. K. Choudhry, through rapid email dialogues, and I know not how to convey the joy and fulfilment that was mine in the learning of the powerful, yet beautifully simple Systems Approach.

After I completed the full text of the Pilgrimage, I passed the manuscript on to Prof. V. K. Choudhry, seeking the light of his astrological knowledge and wisdom. I have incorporated his valuable insights, some of which, in fact, are probably the fruits of his recent research. My heartfelt gratitude goes to him in this regard — both for his kindness as well as his magnanimity of mind.

