

NEWS**Engineer during weekdays, pandit on weekends****Express News Service**

Pune, September 23: IN the early eighties when Vilas Thuse, after doing his masters in agriculture engineering from Benares Hindu University, crossed the seas to set up his base in the Bay Area of the US, little did he know that fate would lead him to try his hand at another vocation — of being an astrologer.

This graduate of College of Engineering Pune began his life in the US like any other Indian engineer — picking up a job in a multinational firm, getting married and settling down in San Francisco. But it was that strange twist of fate that made this Puneite to take up the study of planets — his grandparents and uncles were well-known astrologers.

“When we moved to the US, my wife fell ill. And since we were new to the place, in desperation to find a cure for her health problems, I began to study jyotish shastra,” Thuse said from his Pleasanton residence.

Besides, Thuse and his family on landing on the American shores had a cultural shock. “As you know, it is really hard for an Indian to absorb the US culture immediately. My family, too, had problems in adjusting to the US life. So, I started performing pujas at home,” Thuse recalls about his initiation into the world of planets.

“As days passed, I observed other Indian families settled here also facing the same problems. So, I decided to extend a helping hand and started practising jyotish shastra over the weekends,” said Thuse, a disciple of renowned astrologer Va Da Bhat and merit rank holder in Jyotish Visharad and Jyotish Shastra.

Today, he practises astrology and conducts rituals for the Indian expatriates — from Australia to South Africa to the UK and of course the US — all through his website www.panditjiusa.com.

So, what does the weekend Pandit do with the money earned from his astrology practice? “I have made it clear to my clients that the money will be donated to underprivileged children in India,” said the director (technical resources) at Nishcorp Inc.

Neither does Thuse have a fixed consultation charge. “Dakshina is not a problem. People can pay as per their capacities,” he said.

So, the next time you find it difficult to cope with the US culture or have a puja to be performed at home, all you have to do is log in to the Panditji’s website, fix up an appointment and the rest will be taken care of.

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