

Path to Siva

A Catechism for Youth

Satguru Bodhinatha Veylanswami

Lesson 8



What Is Saivite Hinduism?

Saivism



Saivism is the world's oldest religion.

Worshipping God Siva

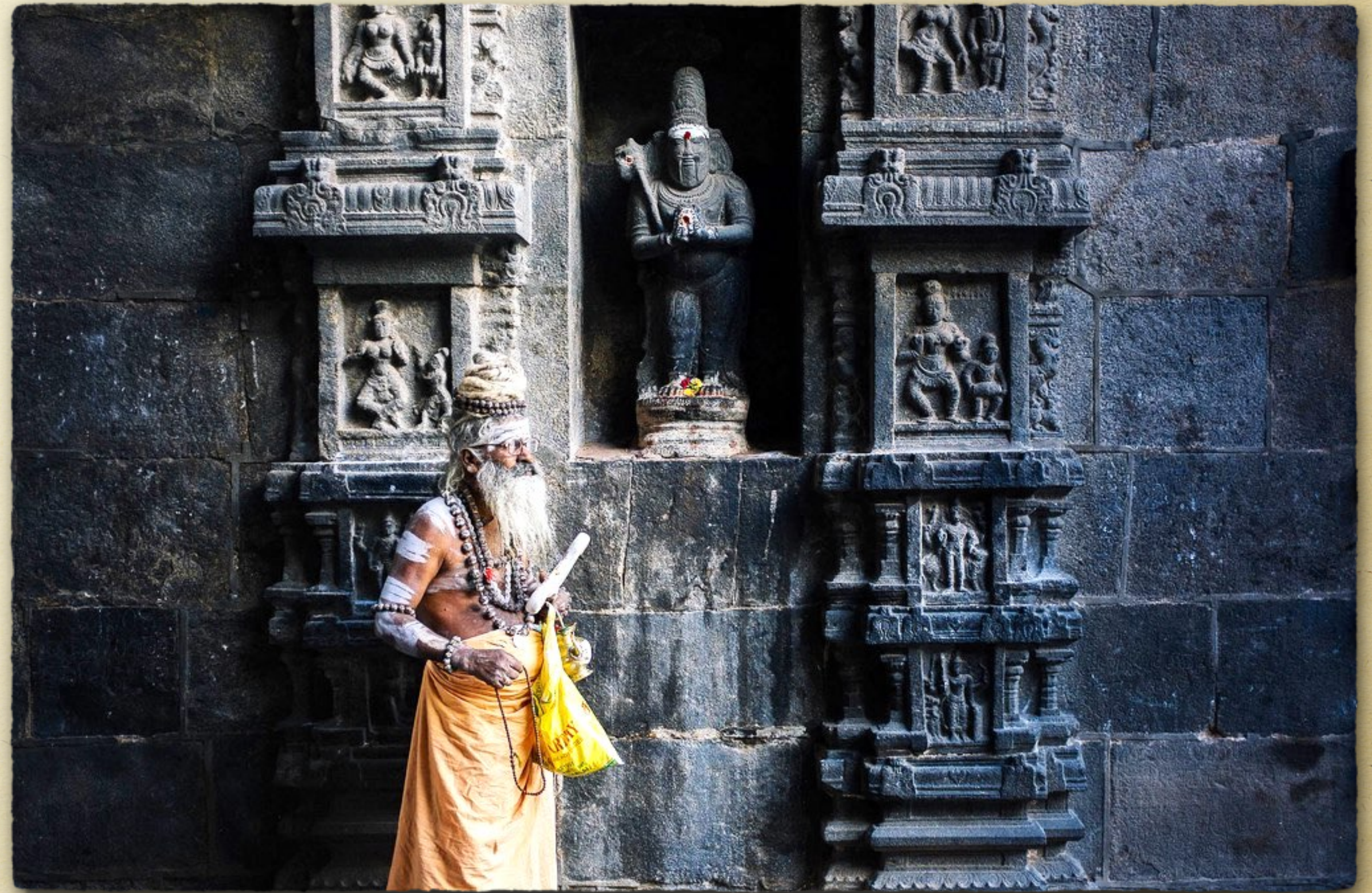
Worshipping God Siva, the compassionate One, it stresses potent disciplines, high philosophy, the guru's centrality and the path of bhakti and raja yoga, leading to oneness with Siva within.



Saivism was never founded

Scholars trace the roots of Siva worship back more than 8,000 years to the advanced Indus Valley civilization.

But sacred writings tell us there never was a time when Saivism did not exist.



Six schools of Saivism

There are six schools of philosophy and tradition within Saivism:

Saiva Siddhanta,
Kashmir Saivism,
Pashupata Saivism,
Vira Saivism,
Siva Advaita
Siddha Siddhanta.



How are they different?

They differ in many ways:

philosophically,

historically,

linguistically

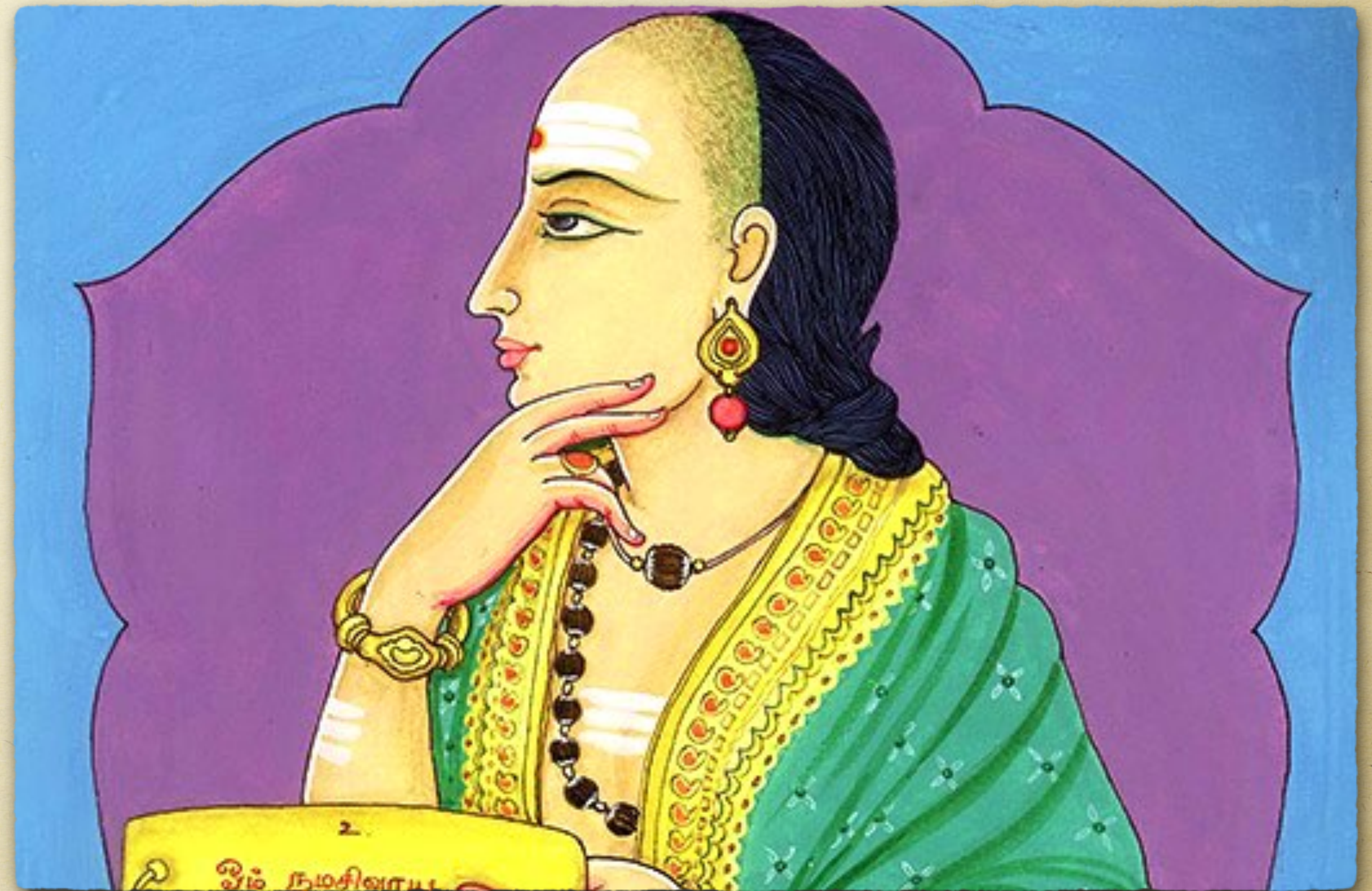
geographically.



What are their similarities?

Still, they share an overwhelming similarity of belief and practice. In addition to the *Vedas*, the *Saiva Agamas* are the shared scriptures of all six schools.

All six identify Siva as the Supreme Lord, both immanent and transcendent, worshiped as the personal Lord and realized through meditation as the Absolute, Parasiva, beyond all form.



Accept basic Agamic doctrines (1)

All hold those principal Agamic doctrines:

1) the five powers of Siva (creation, preservation, destruction, concealing and revealing grace);

2) the three primary elements of existence, *Pati*, *pashu* and *pasha* (God, souls and bonds);

3) the three bonds, or *malas* (*anava*, *karma* and *maya*);

4) the threefold energy of Siva—*iccha*, *kriya* and *jnana shakti* (love, action and wisdom)



Accept basic Agamic doctrines (2)

5) the thirty-six *tattvas*, or categories of existence;

6) the need for a satguru and initiation;

7) the power of mantra; and

8) the four *padas* or stages of spirituality, *charya*, *kriya*, *yoga* and *jnana* (service, devotion, union and wisdom)



Gurudeva explains...

Saivism is the greatest religion in the world, and we are all very fortunate and proud to be Saivites.

It has the most ancient culture on the planet. It has scriptures that are utterly profound.

It has sacred hymns that stir the soul. It has unparalleled disciplines of yoga and meditation.

It has magnificent temples that are truly holy. It has devoted sages and holy men and women.



QUESTIONS

Lesson 8



8.1 Saivism is the world's oldest religion and is the precursor of the many-faceted religion now termed Hinduism.

- True
- False

8.2 The potent disciplines of Saivism ultimately lead to oneness with Siva within.

- True
- False

8.3 Scholars trace the roots of Siva worship back more than
(Check the correct answer)

- A. 3,000 years
- B. 8,000 years
- C. 100,000 years

8.4 The shared scriptures of Saivism's six schools are
(Check the correct answer)

- A. The Vedas
- B. The Vedas and the Saiva Agamas
- C. The Saiva Agamas

8.5 A principal Agamic doctrine is the need for a satguru and initiation.

- True
- False