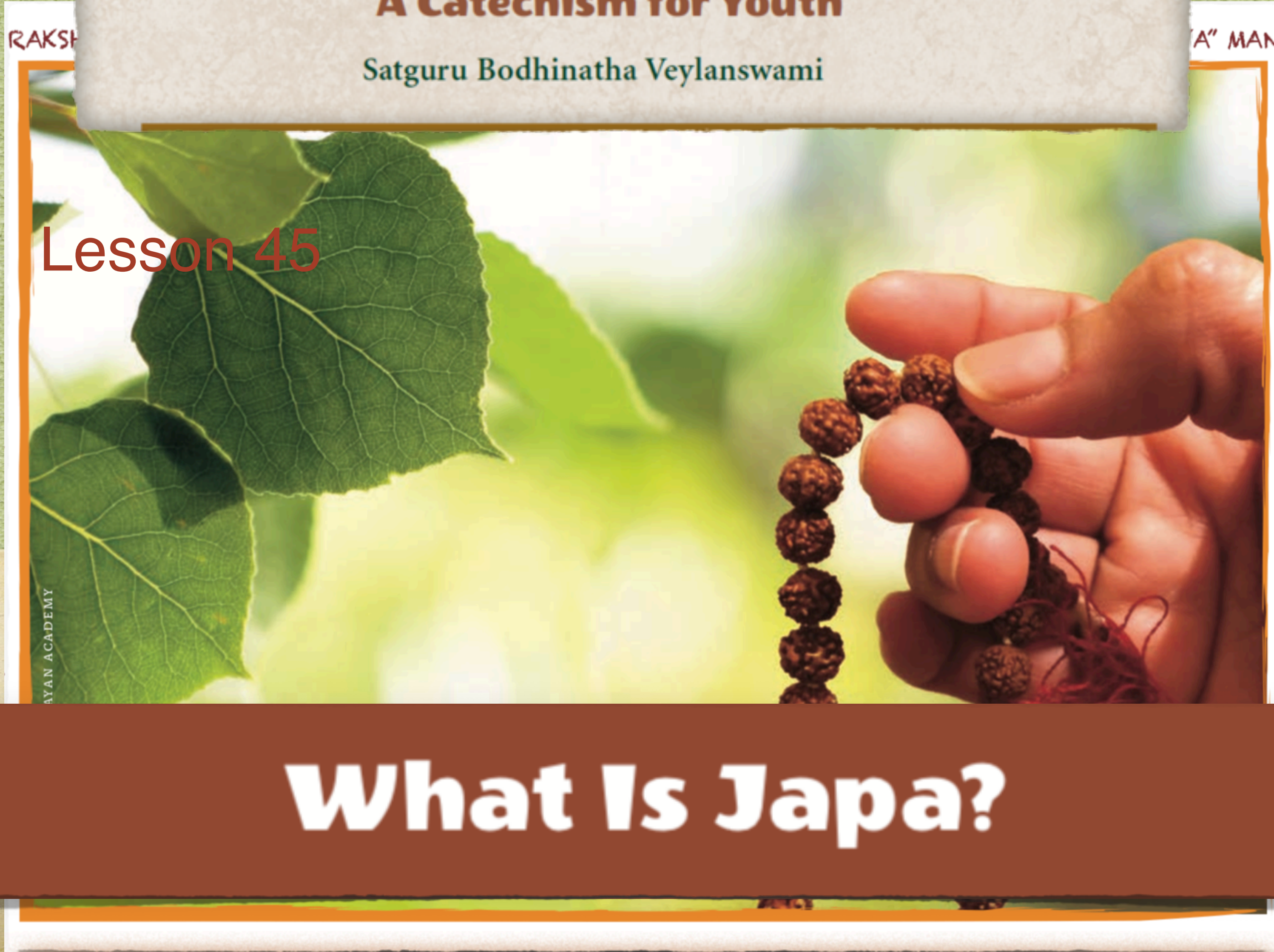# Path to Siva
A Catechism for Youth
Satguru Bodhinatha Veylanswami

Lesson 45

What Is Japa?

Repeating a mantra

A mantra is a sanskrit word or phrase, and repeating one's mantra while counting on beads is called japa, or mantra yoga.

A form of spiritual affirmation

Such a magic chant forms a kind of spiritual affirmation that we repeat mentally or aloud to draw close to God.

It helps us feel in perfect harmony with everything.

Mantra to Lord Ganesha

There are many mantras.

Each one honors God or one of the Gods.

One of Ganesha's mantras is "Aum Gam Ganapataye Namah"

It means "Praise to the Lord of devas."

Mantra to Lord Muruga

Murugan's special mantra is "Aum Saraavanabhâva."

_____

It describes the mind as a peaceful, undisturbed lake.

Supreme saiva mantra

The supreme Saiva mantra, found at the center of the *Yajur Veda,* is "Nama˙ Sivâya," which means "adoration to Siva."
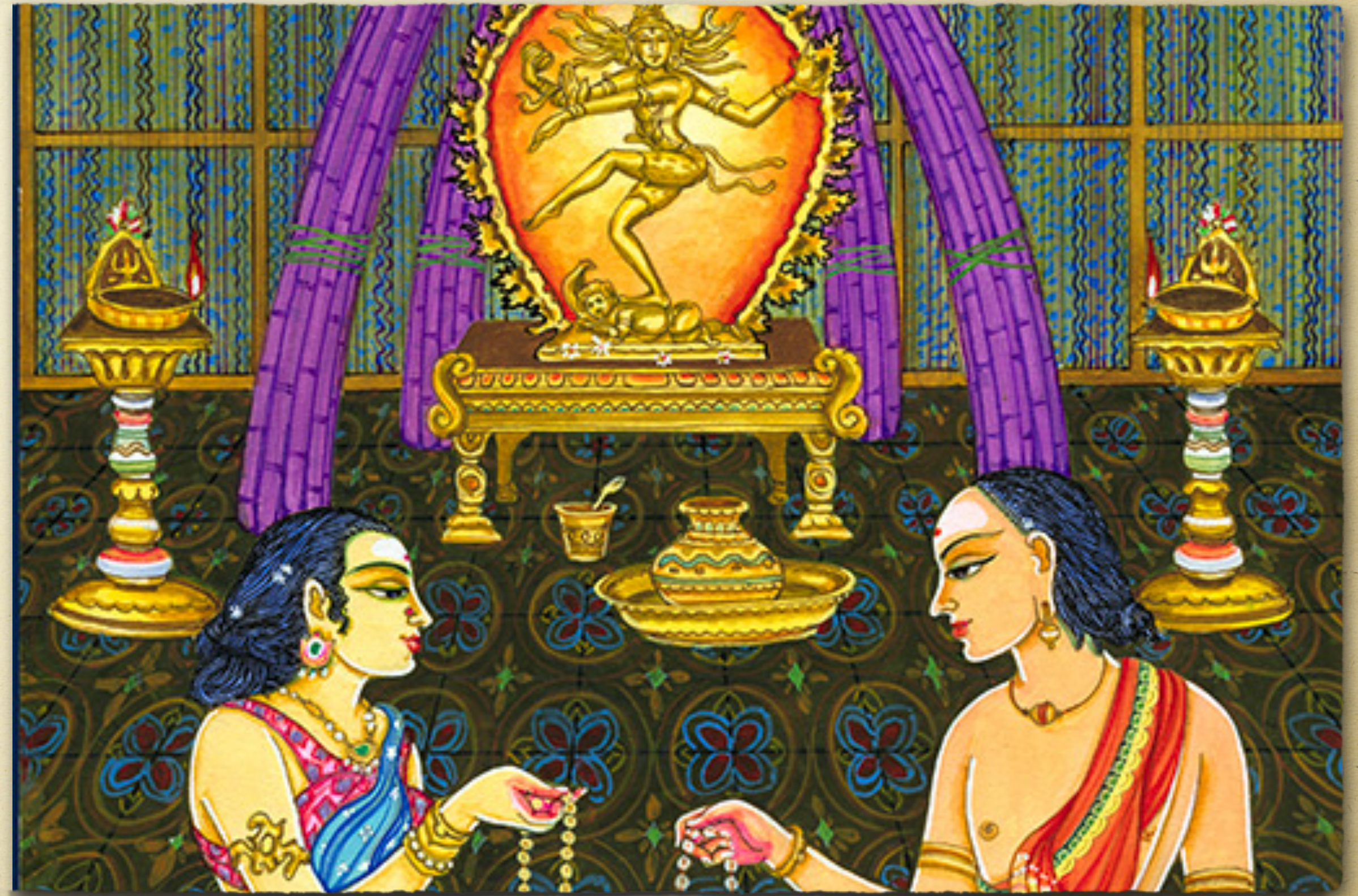

Because it has five syllables (Na-Ma-Si-Vâ-Ya), it is called the Panchakshara Mantra, or "five-lettered chant."

Getting initiation from your Guru

One of your goals as a youth should be to qualify yourself for Nama Sivâya initiation from your guru.
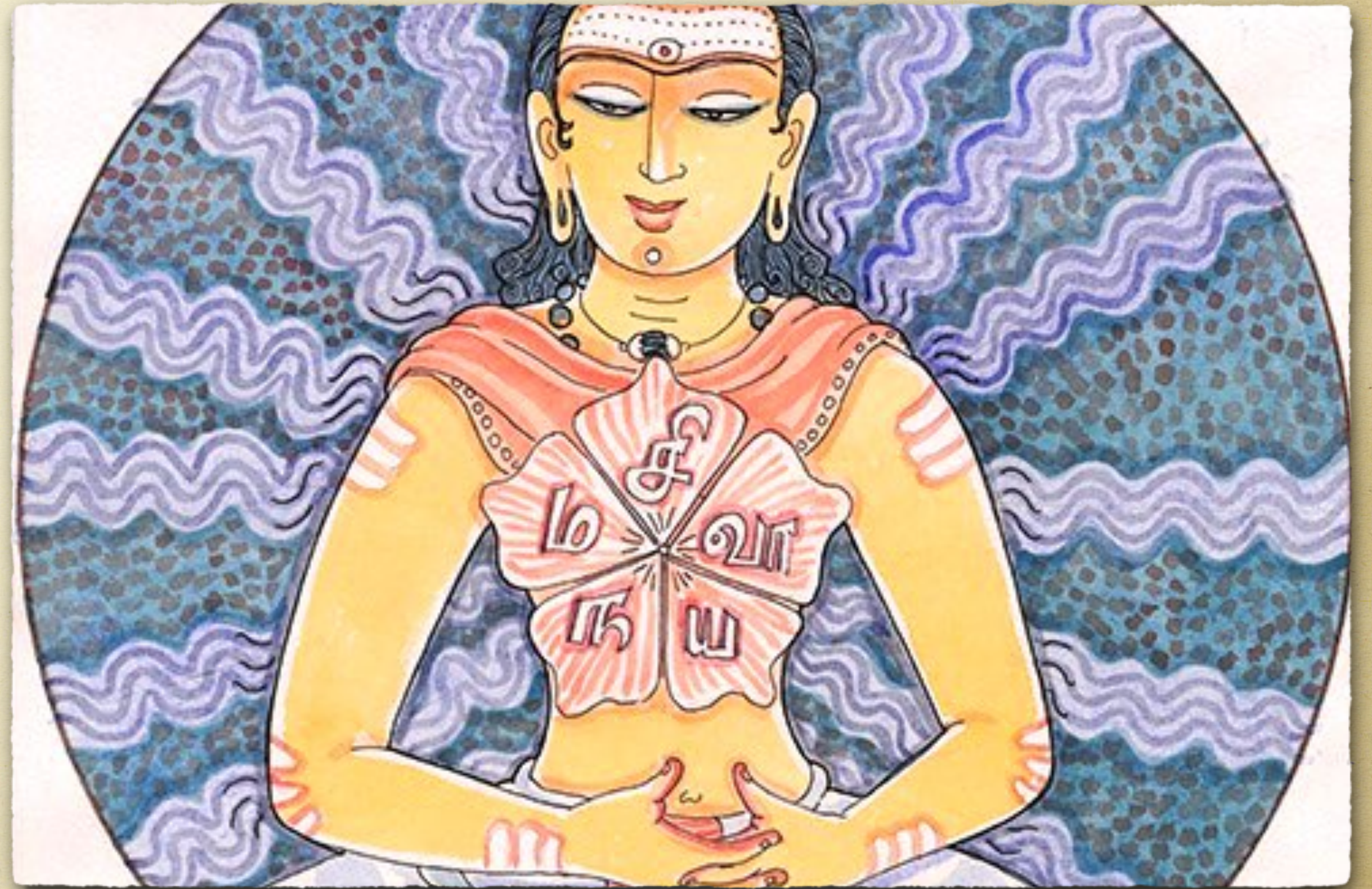

This will give the mantra special power for you. After that ceremony, you will repeat it every day 108 times.

What happens when we chant Aum Namasivâya?

Chanting Aum Namasivâya connects you with millions of Siva's devotees.

Aum Namasivâya feeds your soul, brightens your intellect and quells the instinctive mind.

Chanting Saravanabhava until initiated

Until you are initiated in Namasivâya,
you can chant "Aum Saravanabhâva."

How to perform japa?

Here is how to perform japa.

Sit quietly holding a strand of 108 prayer beads in your right hand.

Repeat the mantra, verbally or mentally.

Each time you repeat it, push a bead over the middle finger with your thumb.

Concentrate on the sound and its meaning as you have been taught.

Keep your mind from wandering.

The devas sending divine rays...

As you chant, the devas send divine rays of blessing.

———————————————————

Perform japa anywhere: in the temple, in your home shrine room, under a favorite tree, on the banks of a river, or in a remote cave.

Gurudeva says...

One who performs japa properly will realize what he knows.

You see, japa opens up the inner mind and focuses the energies of certain chakras, which are consciousness encased within the psychic nerve ganglia of the nadi network.

QUESTIONS for Lesson 45

45.1   **Enter the letter from below of A - D for the phrase that correctly completes the idea.**

___ A mantra is
___ Repeating one's mantra while counting on beads
___ Such a magic chant
___ It helps us feel

(A) Is called japa, or mantra yoga
(B) In perfect harmony with everything
(C) A sacred Sanskrit word or phrase
(D) Forms a kind of spiritual affirmation

45.2   **The mantra "Aum Gam Ganapataye Namah"**
(Check the correct answer)

☐ A. Is a mantra of Lord Ganesha
☐ B. Is a mantra of Lord Murugan
☐ C. Is a mantra of Lord Siva
☐ D. Describes the mind as a peaceful, undisturbed lake
☐ E. Means "Adoration to Siva"
☐ F. Means "Praise to the Lord of devas"

45.3   **The mantra "Aum Saravanabhava"**
(Check the correct answer)

☐ A. Is a mantra of Lord Ganesha
☐ B. Is a mantra of Lord Murugan
☐ C. Is a mantra of Lord Siva
☐ D. Describes the mind as a peaceful, undisturbed lake
☐ E. Means "Adoration to Siva"
☐ F. Means "Praise to the Lord of devas"

45.4   **The mantra "Namah Sivaya"**
(Check the correct answer)

☐ A. Is a mantra of Lord Ganesha
☐ B. Is a mantra of Lord Murugan
☐ C. Is a mantra of Lord Siva
☐ D. Describes the mind as a peaceful, undisturbed lake
☐ E. Means "Adoration to Siva"
☐ F. Means "Praise to the Lord of devas"

45.5   **What gives the mantra "Namah Sivaya" special power?**
(Check the correct answer)

☐ A. Receiving Namah Sivaya initiation from your guru
☐ B. Memorizing songs which refer to Namah Sivaya
☐ C. Repeating it while sitting under a favorite tree