

Path to Siva

A Catechism for Youth

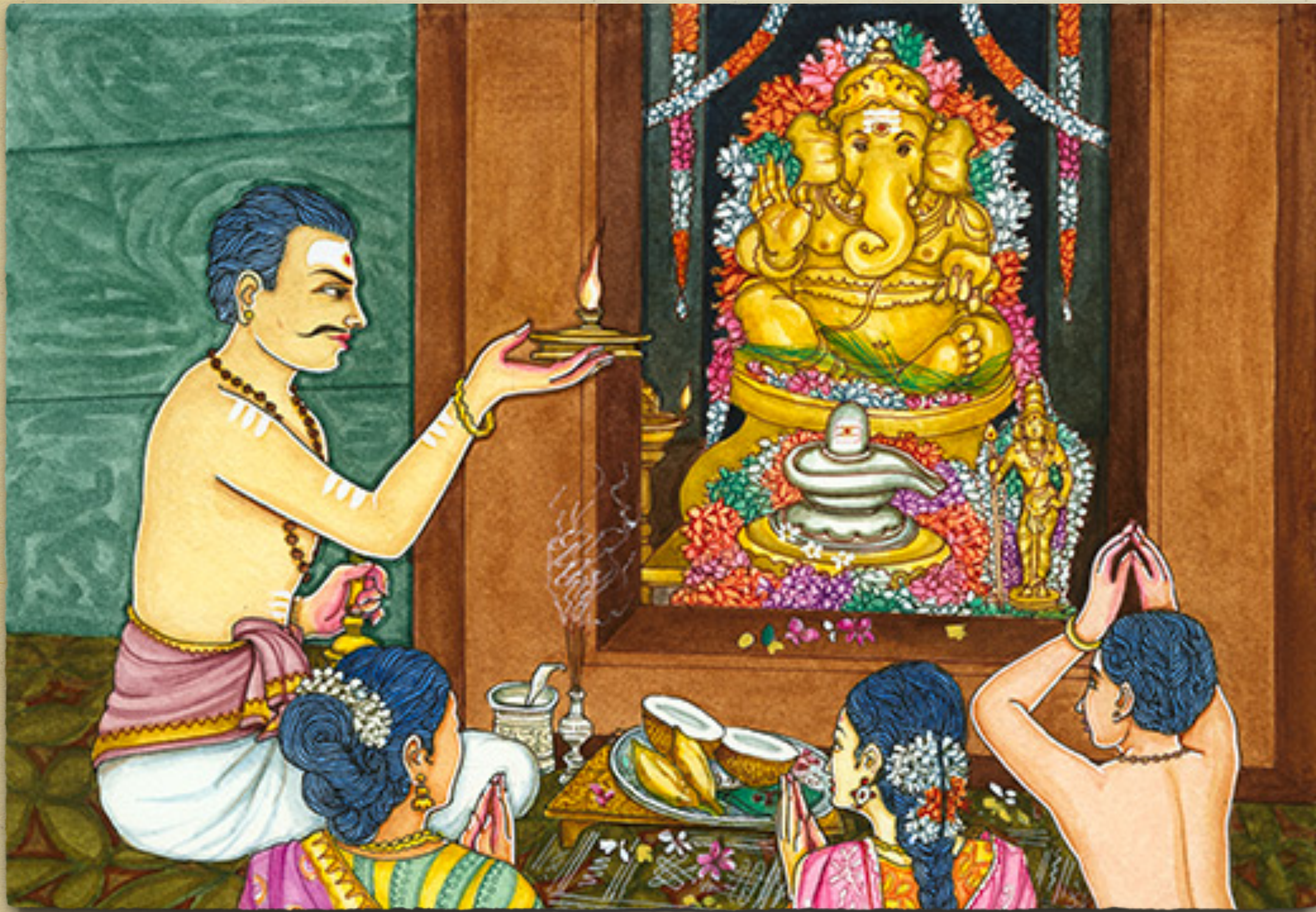
Satguru Bodhinatha Veylanswami

Lesson 53



How Do We Use Our Home Shrine?

The family home shrine



The home shrine is the family personal temple.

It is the heart of the home, a sacred place we go into to be close to God, Gods and the devas.

A entire room...

Hindus who are wise and serious about practicing their religion have an entire room for the home shrine.



The shrine is a sacred place

They keep it just for this purpose and maintain it with a temple-like atmosphere.

They know that a closet or a shelf is not enough to create a sacred space.

In this special room, the family gathers to conduct puja, read scripture, meditate, sing bhajana, do japa and other sadhanas every morning.



Holy days...

On holy days they devote extra time to these practices.



What can a youth do?

As a youth, you can help with the shrine room and make it your special place.

You can collect flowers from the garden, help prepare prasadam and help organize the puja items before the daily worship.

Learn the Sanskrit mantras and chant along with your parents.



The most beautiful room in the house

The home shrine should be the most beautiful room in the house.

It is adorned with pictures of your guru lineage.



Deities in the shrine

The altar has images of God Siva, Lord Ganesha and Lord Murugan.

There are oil lamps, incense, bells, offering trays and flower baskets.



Devas from the temple

Each time we return from the community temple, we visit the shrine and light a lamp.

This connects it to the temple.

If the shrine is kept pure, many devas come and live there, including your own guardian devas.



Gurudeva explains...

Gurudeva said, "A room is set aside for these permanent unseen guests.

It is a room that the whole family can enter and sit in.

They can commune inwardly with these refined beings.

These devas are dedicated to protecting the family generation after generation."



How do the beings of light help?

These beings of light bless and protect you, keeping the home secure and peaceful.

When we provide a home for God inside our own home, it is easy for the family to be happy.

It is easy to get along and love one another.

It is easy to feel Siva's protective presence.



Gurudeva says....

Every Saivite home centers around the home shrine, a special room set aside and maintained to create a temple-like atmosphere in which we conduct puja, read scripture, perform sadhana, meditate, sing bhajana and do japa.



QUESTIONS for Lesson 53



53.1 Hinduism is both a religion and a way of life because
(Check the correct answer)

- A. Many Hindus follow a vegetarian way of life
- B. Hinduism is a highly spiritual way of life
- C. Many Hindus believe in protecting animals

53.2 To devout Hindus, all of life is spiritual; all of our daily activities are part of our religious practice.

- True
- False

53.3 The broad name by which our religion is known and honored in the world is
(Check the correct answer)

- A. Sanatana Dharma
- B. Hinduism
- C. Saivism
- D. Indian Philosophy

53.4 The world in which we live is such a perfect place that it has no need for Hinduism's messages of peace, noninjury and open-mindedness.

- True
- False

53.5 Hindus as a religious community enjoy many protections and a respected unified voice.

- True
- False