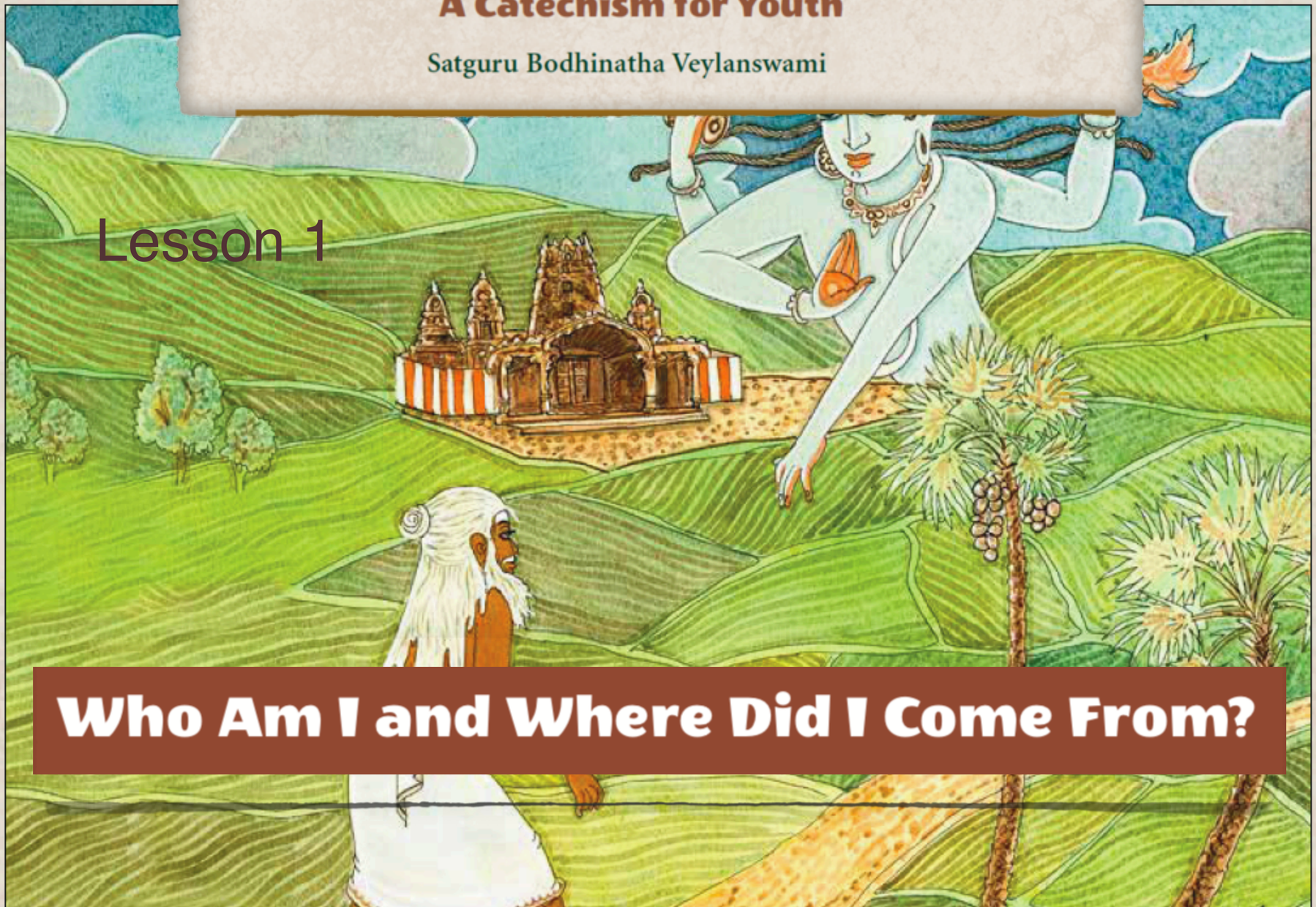
Path to Siva

A Catechism for Youth

Satguru Bodhinatha Veylanswami



Lesson 1

Who Am I and Where Did I Come From?

Seekers ask:”Who am I and where did I come from?”



They inwardly know they are more than just another person with a particular name who was born in a certain place.

They want to understand…

They sense that they are more than their body, mind and emotions.

They want to understand, “Did I exist before I was born? Will I exist after death?”



We are a divine soul …

The answer given in Saivite Hinduism is that we are each a divine soul on a wondrous journey.

We are an immortal body of light that has lived many lives, had many bodies and personalities.



Gurudeva explains…

“When the soul has had enough experience, it naturally seeks to be liberated, to unravel the bonds. That begins the most wonderful process in the world as the seeker steps for the first time onto the spiritual path.

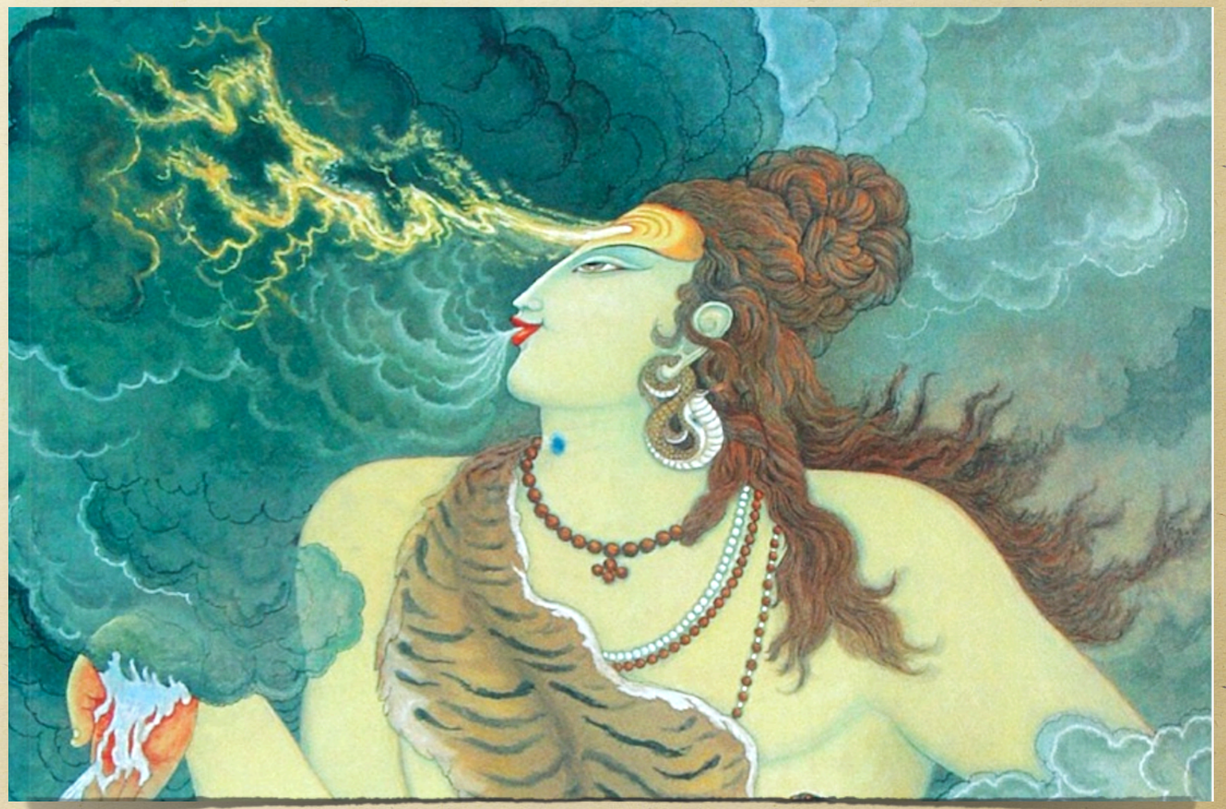
Of course, the whole time, through all those births and lives and deaths, the soul was undergoing a spiritual evolution, but unconsciously. Now it seeks to know God consciously.”



Who has created our soul?

Our soul was created by God Siva out of Himself, like sparks flying forth from a fire.

Like the sparks and the fire, we are both the same and different from Siva, our source.



Lord Siva is in all things

We live within His boundless creation, this unthinkably vast cosmos which is filled with His divine presence.

Siva is the life energy in the birds, in the fish and in the animals.

His being flows through all we see and experience.

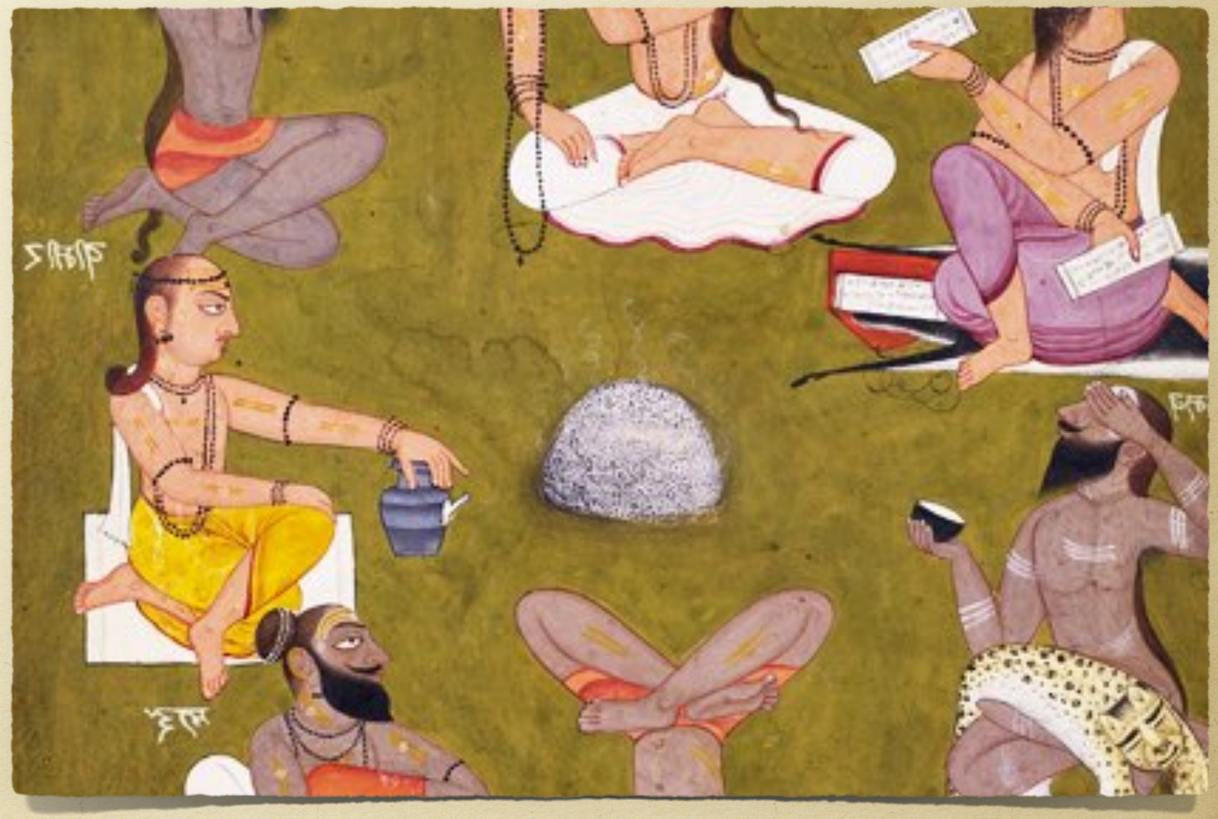


According to our Vedic rishis…

Our Vedic rishis have assured us that “God is the Life of our life.”

We are all beautiful children of God Siva.

Deep within, we are one with Him this very moment.



We were created in perfect state

We came from God, live in God and are evolving into complete unity with God.

Siva created each of us in a perfect state, but we have to discover that perfection within us to be whole.



God Siva is the life energy…

By seeing the life energy in all creatures and in all people, we are seeing God Siva in action.

By drawing close to God, we draw nearer to our immortal soul.

Siva is all and within all.

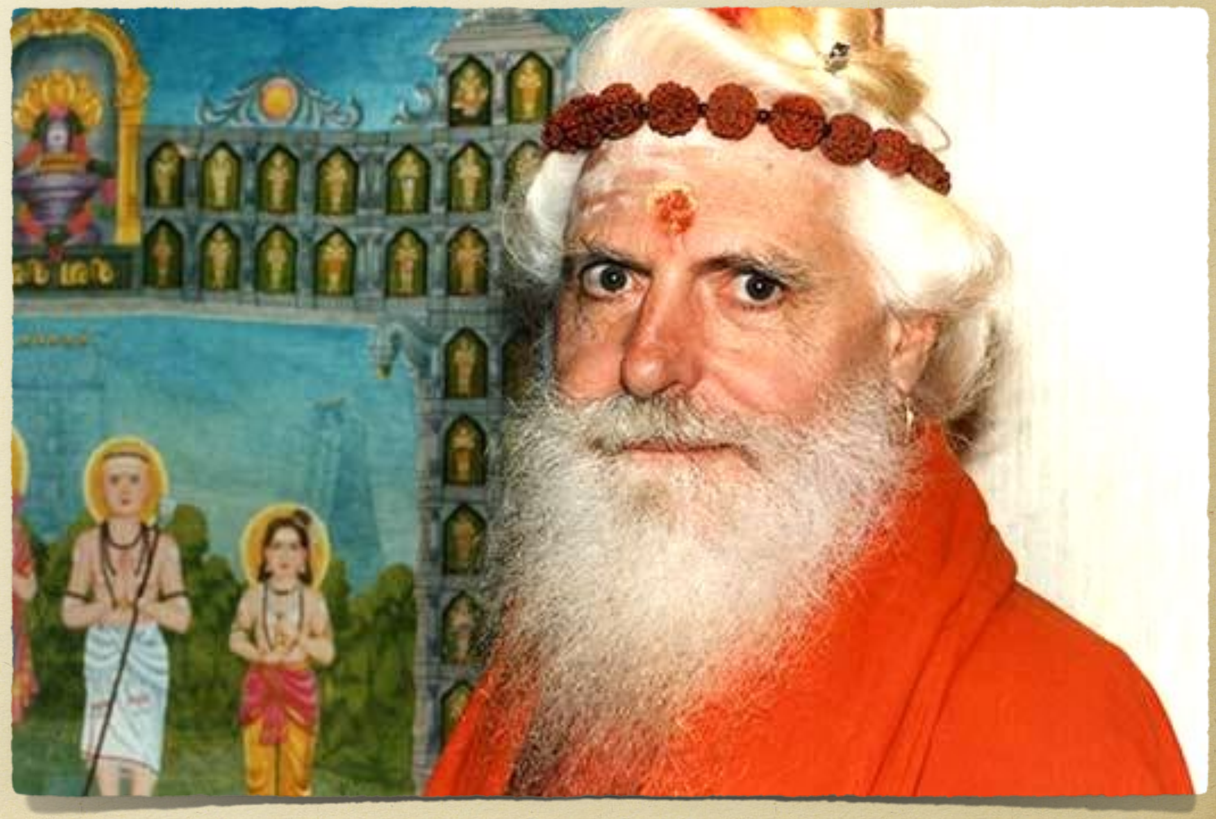


Gurudeva explains…

When we realize that we have come from Siva, the way back to Siva is clearly defined.

That is half the battle, to realize we came from Siva, live in Siva and are returning to Siva.

Knowing only this much makes the path clear and impels us to return to Him, to our Source, to our Self.



QUESTIONS Lesson 1



1.1 **Our soul is a body made of...**

- ❑A. Water
- ❑B. Light
- ❑ C.Flesh

1.2 **Our soul lives on Earth...**

- ❑A. Only one lifetime
- ❑B. Three lifetime
- ❑C. Many lifetimes

1.3 **Being on the spiritual path means to...**

- ❑ A. Walk around a temple
- ❑ B. Climb a sacred mountain
- ❑ C. Seek to know God consciously

1.4 **Our soul was created by...**

- ❑ A. Our parents
- ❑ B. God Siva
- ❑ C. The hospital in which we were born

1.5 **The life energy in all living creatures...**

- ❑A. Comes from eating food
- ❑ B. Comes from the sun
- ❑ C. Comes from God

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Path to Siva

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Lesson 2

Where Am I Going? What Is My Path?

Born in a physical body



Life has a purpose.

We have taken birth in a physical body to mature into our divine potential.

Many past lives…

This life is one more chapter in a maturing process that has been occurring over many past lives.

All souls are on this same journey.



We are like a tiny acorn

The deepest part of our soul, our essence, is and has always been one with Siva, but our soul body is still maturing.

We are like a tiny acorn growing into a mighty oak tree.



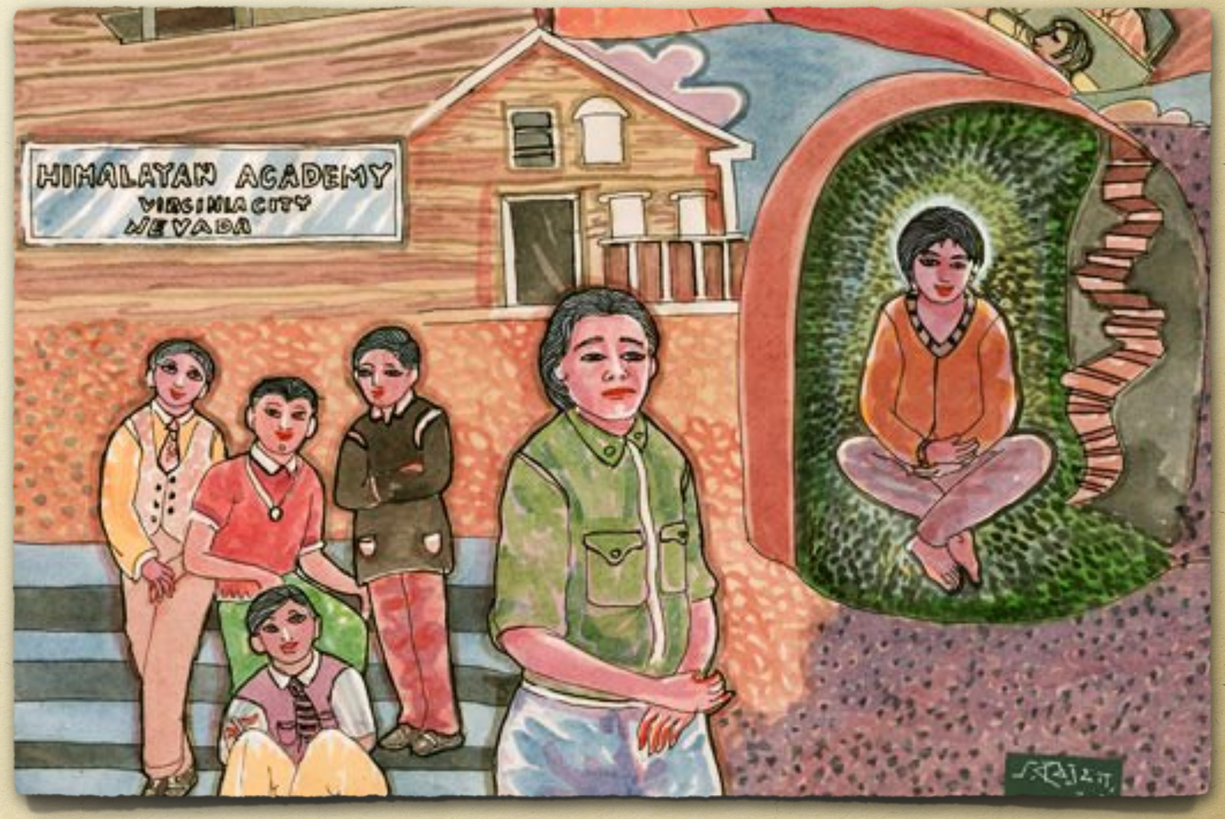
What do we learn?

We grow by learning to control our mind, body and emotions.

The stronger we get, the more we sense our Sivaness.

At first we learn from our suffering to avoid more suffering.

We turn fear into fearlessness, anger into love and conflict into peace.



Selfless service

We then learn to serve.

Selfless service is the beginning of spiritual striving.

Through our selfless service, we come into deep understanding and love of God.



The world we live in.

We can then see that the world we live in, the people we relate to and we ourselves are none other than Siva.



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We learn to meditate

Finally, we learn to meditate deeply, to quiet the mind, find peace and silence within ourselves, and watch ourselves going through all our experiences like watching an actor in a movie—knowing that our true identity is the soul, the watcher.



Where does meditation lead us?

That practice brings us to the realization of God within us.

At the end of this evolutionary journey, we are fully one with God—no difference remains.

We call this ancient path of spiritual striving San Marga, the “True Path.”



What is the San Marga?

It is a path of service, worship, yoga and wisdom.

Just as a train reaches its destination by following the tracks, we reach our innate perfection and freedom from rebirth by following the San Marga.



Gurudeva explains…

We are the undying consciousness and energy flowing through all things. Deep inside we are perfect this very moment, and we have only to discover and live up to this perfection to be whole.



QUESTIONS Lesson 2



2.1 Our soul is comprised of...

- ❑ A. A soul body
- ❑ B. A soul body and the essence of the soul
- ❑ C. The essence of the soul

2.2 Our soul body…

- ❑ A. Doesn't change
- ❑ B. Is already fully matured
- ❑ C. Is in the process of maturing

2.3 Our soul body matures…

- ❑ A. Automatically as our physical body matures
- ❑ B. By learning to control our mind, body and emotions
- ❑ C. By going to school

2.4 The spiritual path leads us from:

(Number the steps in the order they occur from 1 - 6)

__ Deep Understanding
__ Meditation
__ Learning how to avoid suffering
__ Selfless service
__ Suffering
__ Realization of God

2.5 San Marga, the "True Path", consists of four stages which are:

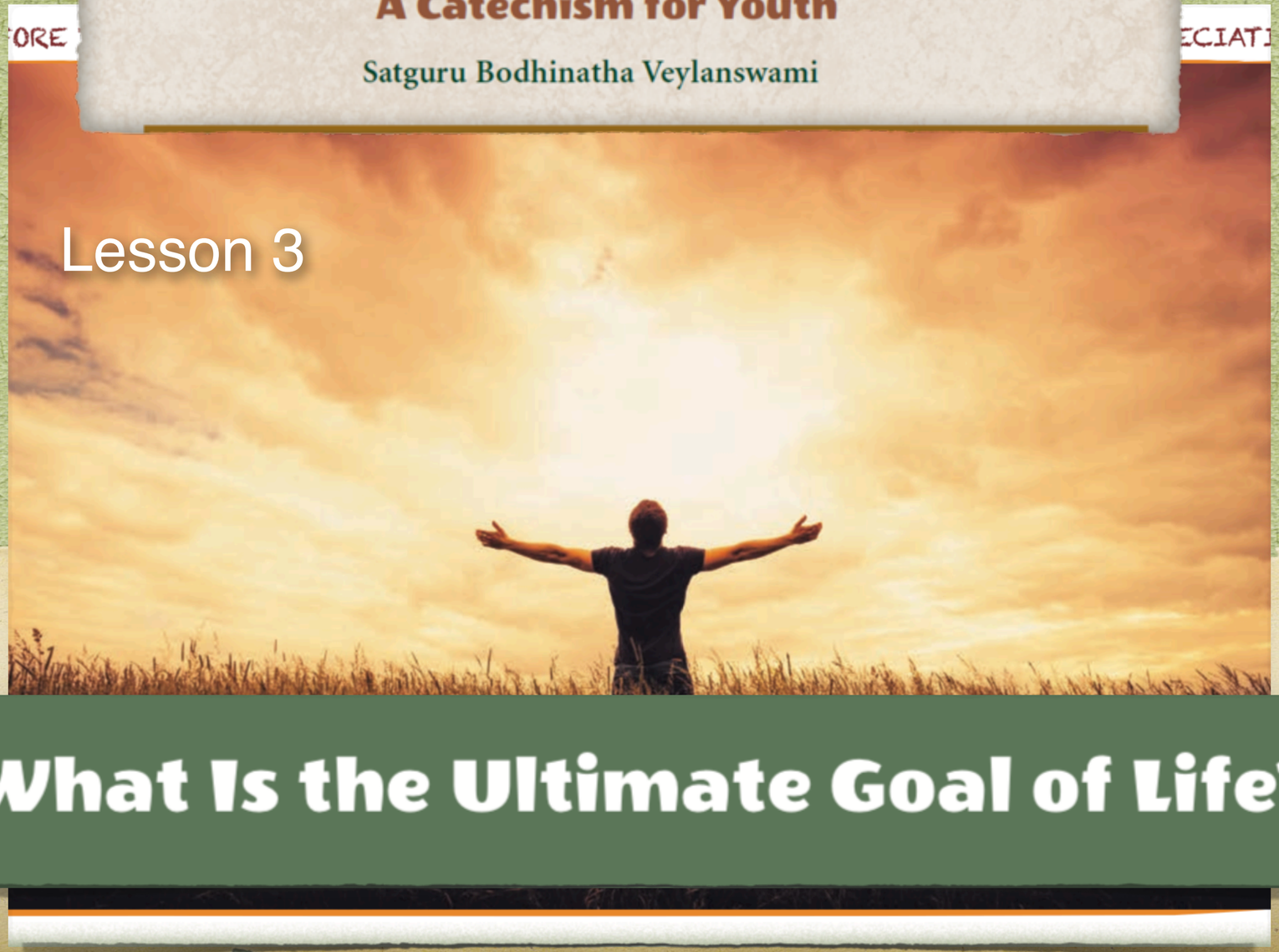
(Number the stages in the order they occur from 1 - 4)

__ Yoga
__ Worship
__ Wisdom
__ Service

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Lesson 3

What Is the Ultimate Goal of Life?

What is our ultimate goal?



Knowing God is life's highest goal, reached by mature souls following a spiritual path.

The highest peak of life…

Just as only the most highly disciplined climbers reach the summit of Mount Everest each year, only a few mature souls reach life's highest peak in this life.



Souls were not created all at once.

That is because souls were not created all at once.

There are old souls and young souls. Older souls have matured over many lifetimes.

They have enjoyed life’s pleasures, suffered all the many sorrows and faced countless challenges.



What happens as we mature?

This process has made them strong, like the mountaineers, and ready for the final ascent, ready to become one with God Siva.

As we mature, we become kind, generous, understanding and truthful. Anger, fear and jealousy no longer control us as they once did.

We become wise and loving.



We do not have to be reborn.

Reaching this maturity moves us toward life's true purpose.

Eventually we no longer need the experiences of Earth, so we do not need to be reborn.

Instead, we continue to evolve and serve humanity in the heavenly worlds in our subtle body.



Liberation or Moksha

This graduation from the cycle of reincarnation is called moksha, which means freedom, release or liberation.

But before we attain moksha, we must experience the highest goal of raja yoga—the realization of the Self, God.

After Self Realization, you no longer see yourself as just someone from some place.



All souls will attain *moksha*…

Instead, when you look inward, you see Siva.

When you look at other people, you see Siva.

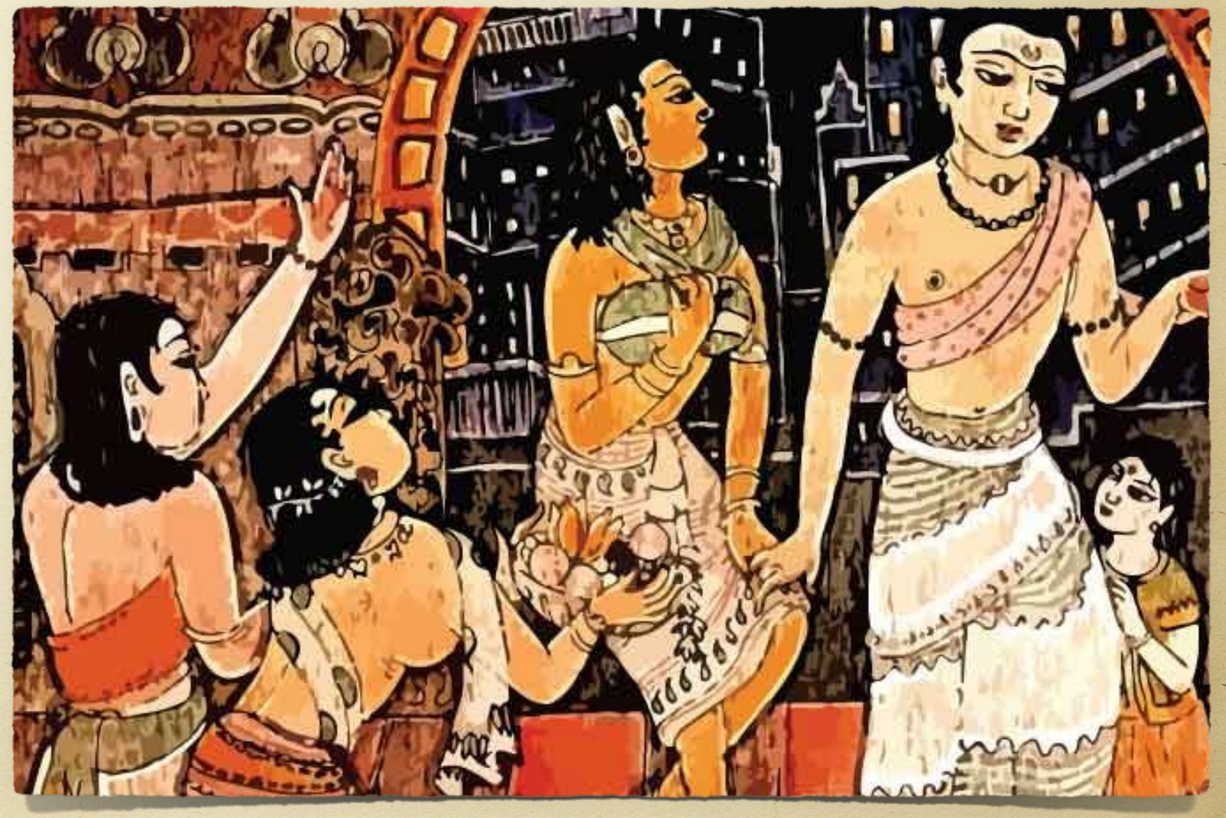
All souls will achieve moksha, but only a few will do so in this lifetime.

Hindus know this and do not think that this life is the last.



Life’s other three goals

While seeking to perfect themselves through service, worship and yoga, they know there is also much progress to be made in fulfilling life’s other three goals: righteousness, wealth and enjoyment.



After moksha the soul continues to evolve.

Even moksha is not the end of our path.

After liberation from rebirth, the soul body continues to evolve in the inner worlds until it fully merges with God.

Jiva (the soul) becomes Siva, a union called *vishvagrasa.*



A perfect ancient path…

Being on an ancient path followed by countless souls gives the serene feeling that everything is all right as it is, that everything is perfect.



Gurudeva explains…

Each soul discovers its Sivaness, Absolute Reality, Parasiva - the timeless, formless, spaceless Self God.



QUESTIONS
Lesson 3



3.1 **Life's highest goal is to...**

☐ A. Become wealthy
☐ B. Know God
☐ C. Make a major scientific discovery

3.2 **Souls that attain God-Realization in this lifetime...**

☐ A. Are younger souls
☐ B. Are older souls
☐ C. Are chosen at random

3.3 **Check the qualities that do *not* relate to someone who is spiritually mature:**

☐ A. Kind
☐ B. Angry
☐ C. Generous
☐ D. Understanding E. Fearful
☐ F. Truthful
☐ G. Wise
☐ H. Jealous
☐ I. Loving

3.4 **To achieve moksha we must experience the realization of the Self, God**

☐ True
☐ False

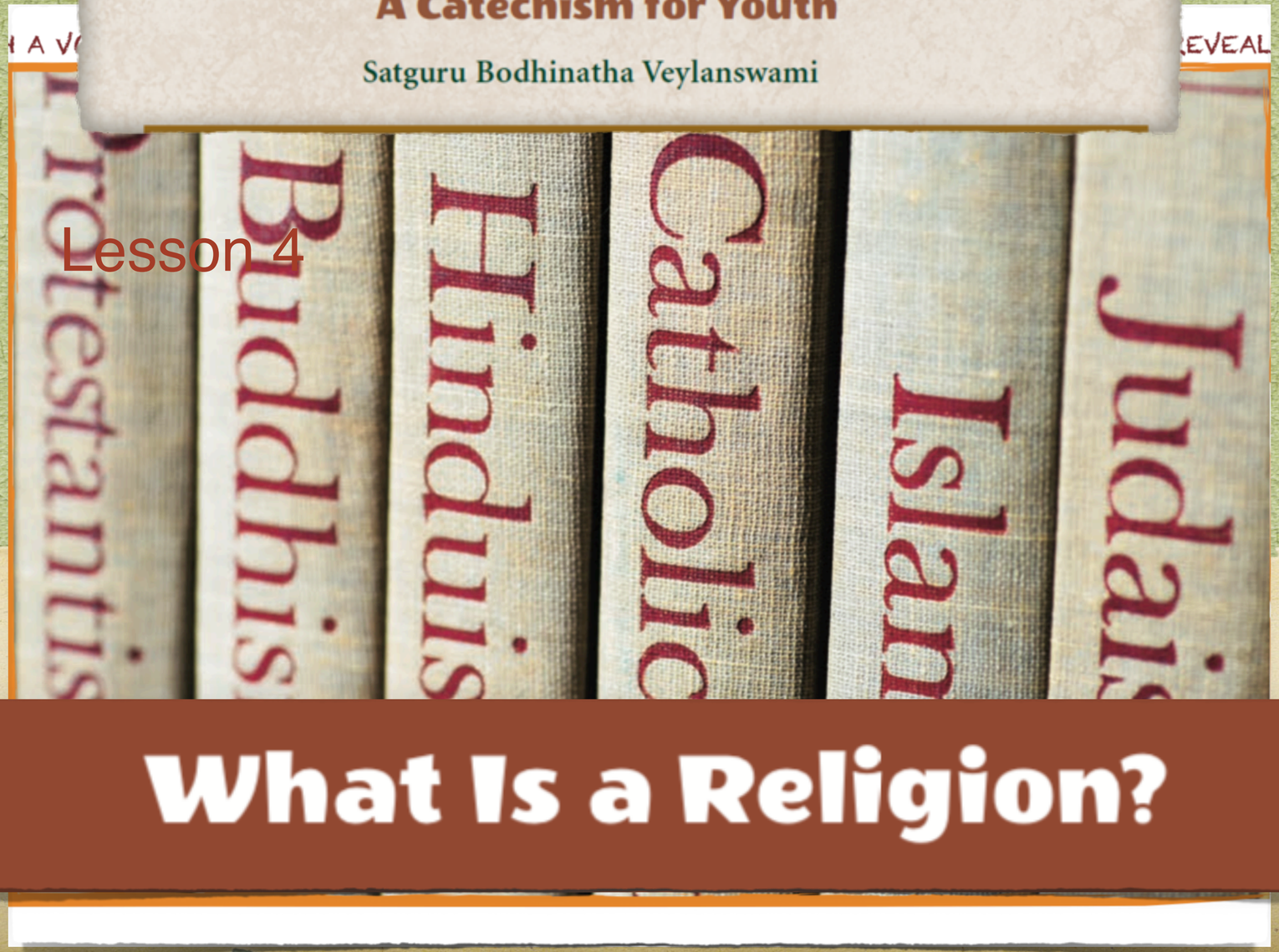
3.5 **Moksha will eventually be achieved...**

☐ A. By only a few souls
☐ B. By all souls
☐ C. By most souls but not all

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Lesson 4

What Is a Religion?

Religion ?



A religion is a system of belief about God, soul and world.

Throughout history, seekers around the world have tried to understand the nature of things.

Man tried to unravel mysteries…

They struggled to unravel the mysteries of the mind, of ultimate reality and the purpose of life.

They puzzled about the cause of suffering and the way to relieve it.

They analyzed good and evil, virtue and vice.

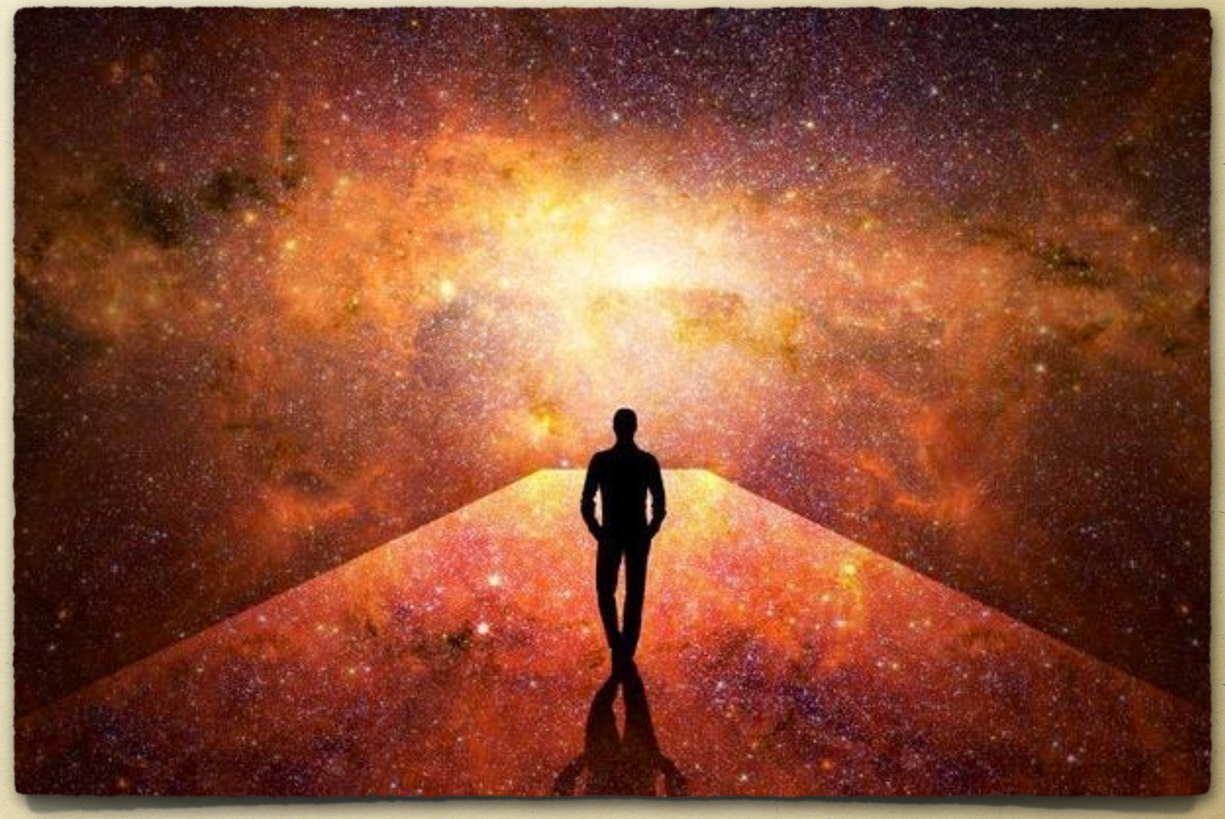


Thoughts based on a holy presence

These quests for truth have produced various systems of thought.

Those based on a belief in God or a holy presence are called religions or faiths.

Today there are about a dozen major religions in the world and hundreds of smaller ones.



The five largest religions

Of Earth's 7.4 billion people, six billion are followers of a religion.

Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Chinese folk religion and Buddhism are the five largest.



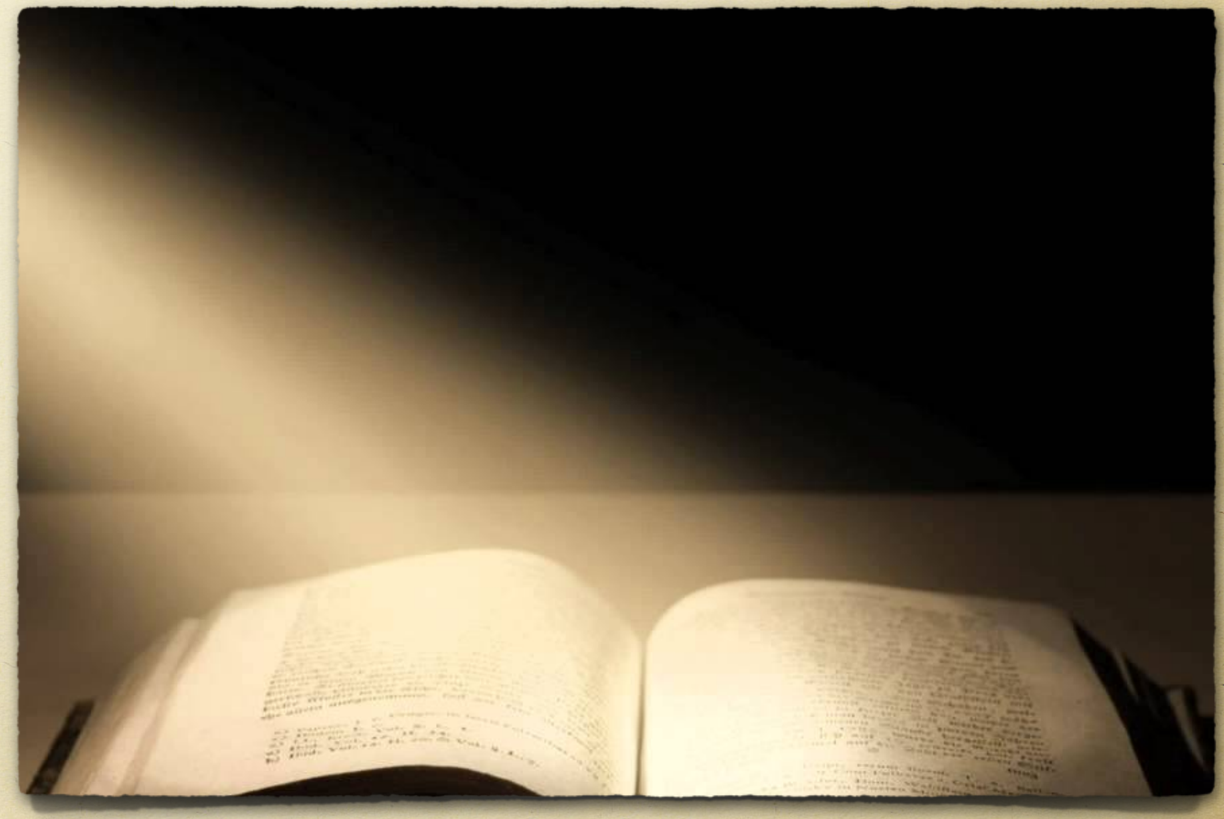
Sacred texts or scriptures

Many traditional cultures have ancient faiths.

Most religions have sacred texts, called scriptures.

Hinduism's primary scriptures are the *Vedas*.

Buddhists have the *Dhammapada,* Christians look to the *Bible* and Muslims have the *Koran.*



What happens when we die?

Scriptures, and the teachings of saints through history, define how life should be lived and what happens when we die.

Each faith has its places of worship, priesthood and holy rites.



Eastern and western religions

Religions are not all the same.

Their beliefs and practices differ, often greatly.

Of Earth’s major religions, Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism and Sikhism are Eastern.

Judaism, Zoroastrianism, Christianity and Islam are Western.



Vast differences between eastern and western.

There is a vast difference between Eastern and Western religions, with Eastern goals being unitive and introspective and Western goals being dualistic, extroverted.



Where to seek God?

Eastern faiths tend to see God in all things, and everything as sacred.

Western faiths tend not to believe that God pervades everything, and make a strong distinction between what is sacred and what is profane.



Single life or many lives?

While Eastern faiths hold to karma, reincarnation and liberation, the Western postulate a single life for the soul, followed by reward or punishment.



Gurudeva explains…

Religion is the connection between the three worlds, and temple worship is how you can get your personal connection with the inner worlds.



QUESTIONS
Lesson 4



4.1 **Religion is a system…**

☐A. Of understanding the planets and stars
☐B. Of belief about God, soul and world
☐C. Of understanding society

4.2 **Enter the letter from list below of A - D for the correct primary scripture for the religion.**

___ Hindus
___ Buddhists
__ Christians
___ Muslims

(A) Dhammapada
(B) Bible
(C) Vedas
(D) Koran

4.3 **Scriptures define how life should be lived and what happens when we die.**

☐ True
☐ False

4.4 **Check the statement that is true.**

☐ A. Religions are all the same because they all believe in God or a holy presence.

☐ B. Religions are not all the same because their beliefs and practices differ, often greatly.

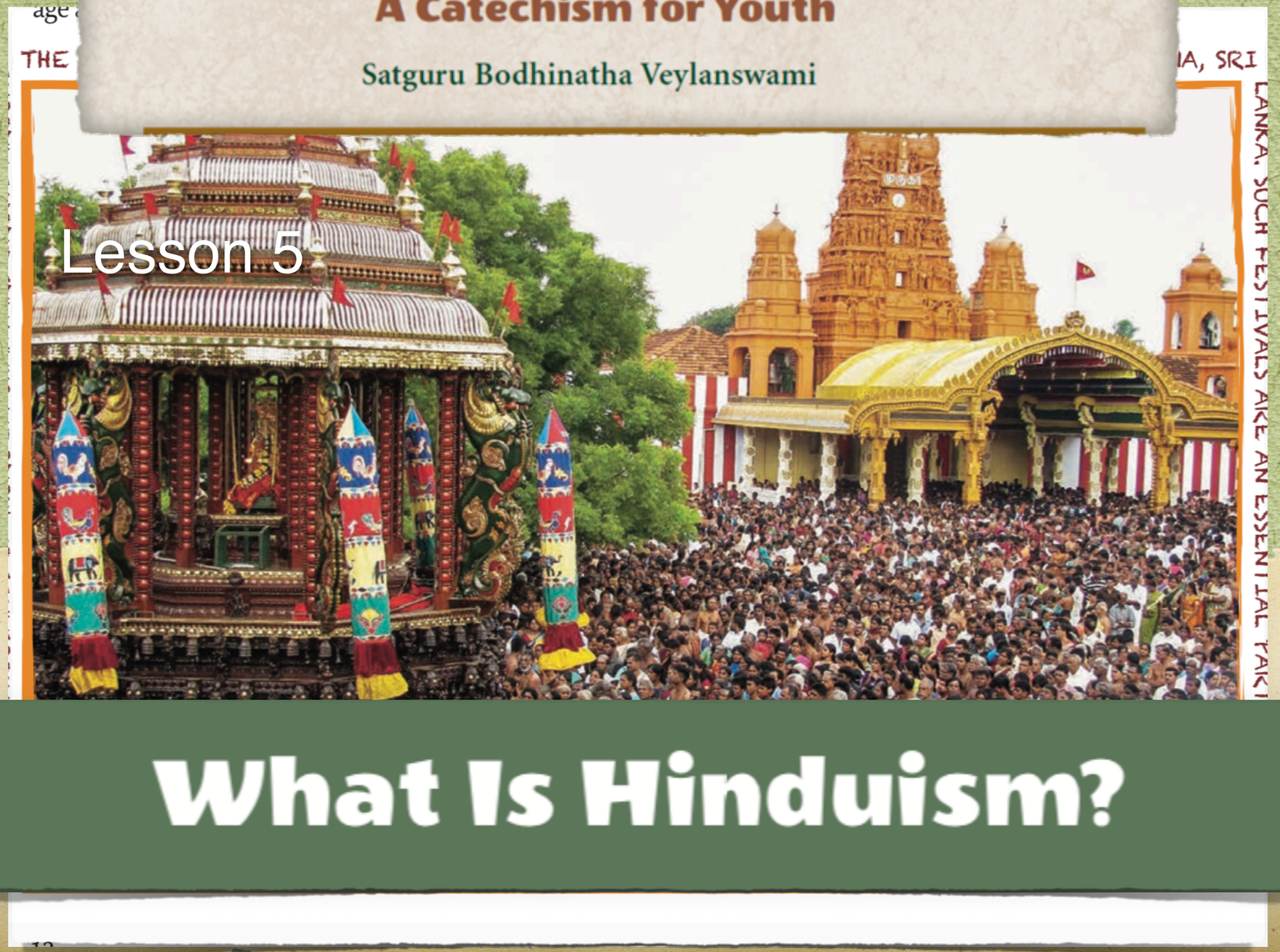
4.5 **In the list below, check those beliefs and practices which belong to Eastern religions.**

☐ A. Believe in a single life, followed by reward or punishment
☐ B. Unitive and introspective
☐ C. Do not see God pervading all things
☐D. See God in all things, and all things as sacred
☐E. Believe in karma, reincarnation and liberation
☐F. Dualistic, extroverted.

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Lesson 5

What Is Hinduism?

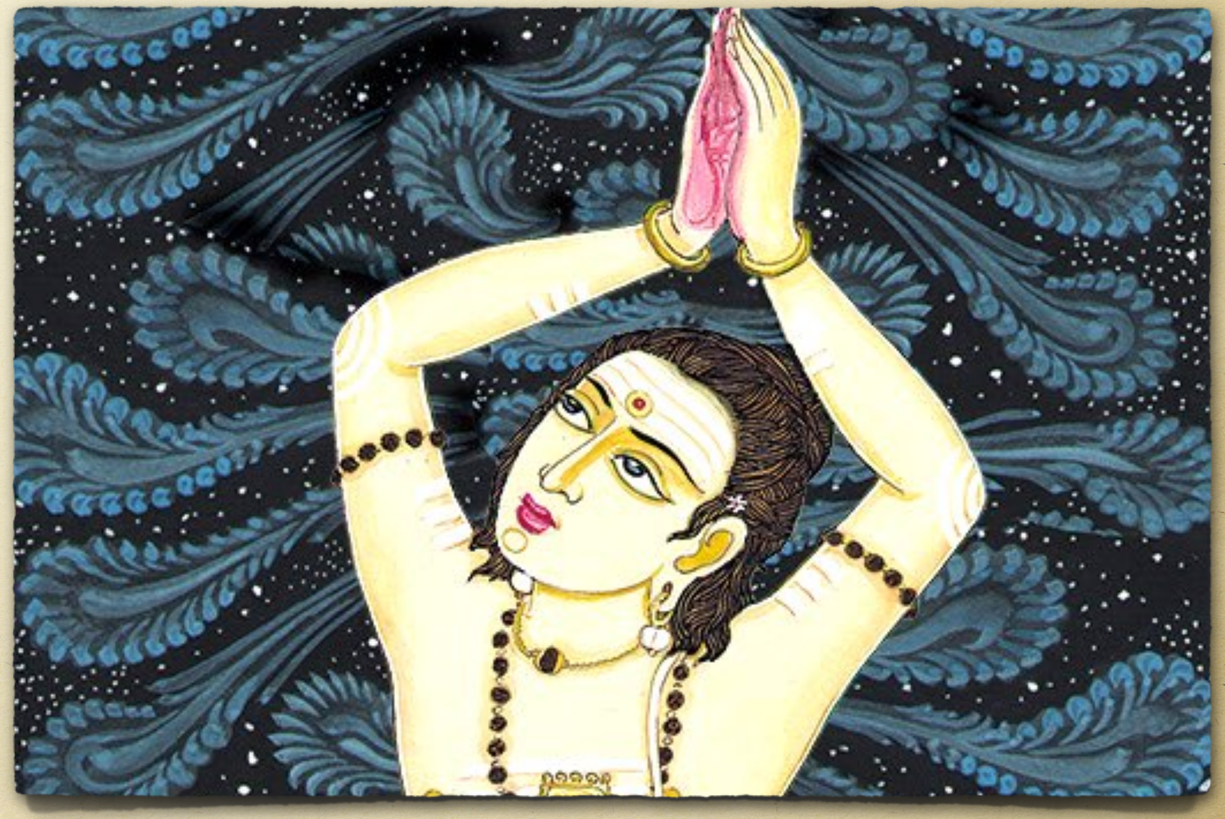
What is Hinduism?



Hinduism is the ancient religion of India, practiced today by one billion people all over the world.

The Sanatana Dharma

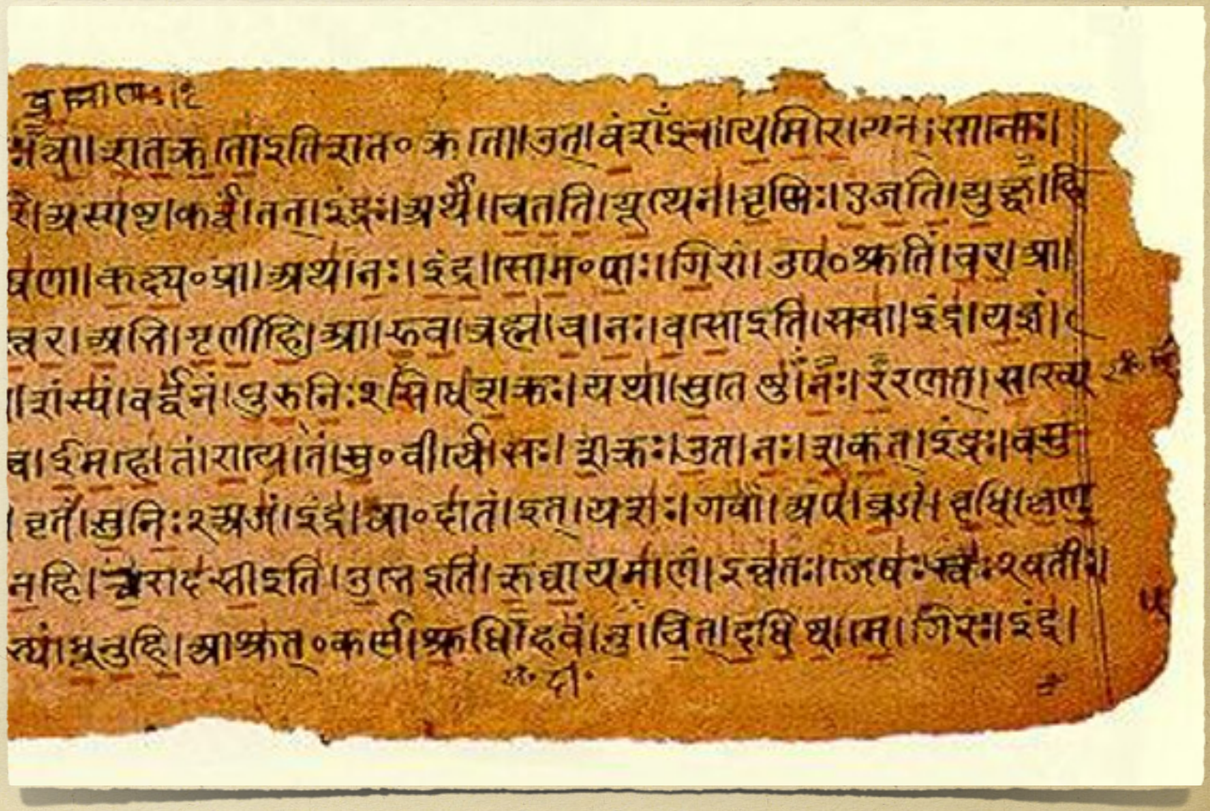
With no founder and stretching back unknown thousands of years in India's earliest known civilizations, Hinduism is called Sanatana Dharma, the "eternal faith."



Four basic beliefs …

It is based on the *Vedas* and other scriptures.

Four beliefs are most central.



Belief in one Supreme God

First is belief in one Supreme God who created the universe, and who abides everywhere within it.

He/ She is all and in all.



Belief in Karma

Second is belief in the law of karma, the principle of cause and effect, action and reaction.



Belief in dharma.

Third is belief that the cosmos is governed by the principle of dharma, which is divine order, righteousness and duty.



Belief in Reincarnation

Fourth, Hindus believe in reincarnation, the natural process of birth, death and rebirth.



Beliefs alone are not enough.

While these four convictions are essential, in Hinduism belief alone is not enough to propel us forward on the path.

It is our actions and behavior that are the keys to spiritual progress.



Religious practice is essential.

Hindus seek to experience God and their inner self through temple worship, meditation, yoga, pilgrimage and devotional singing.

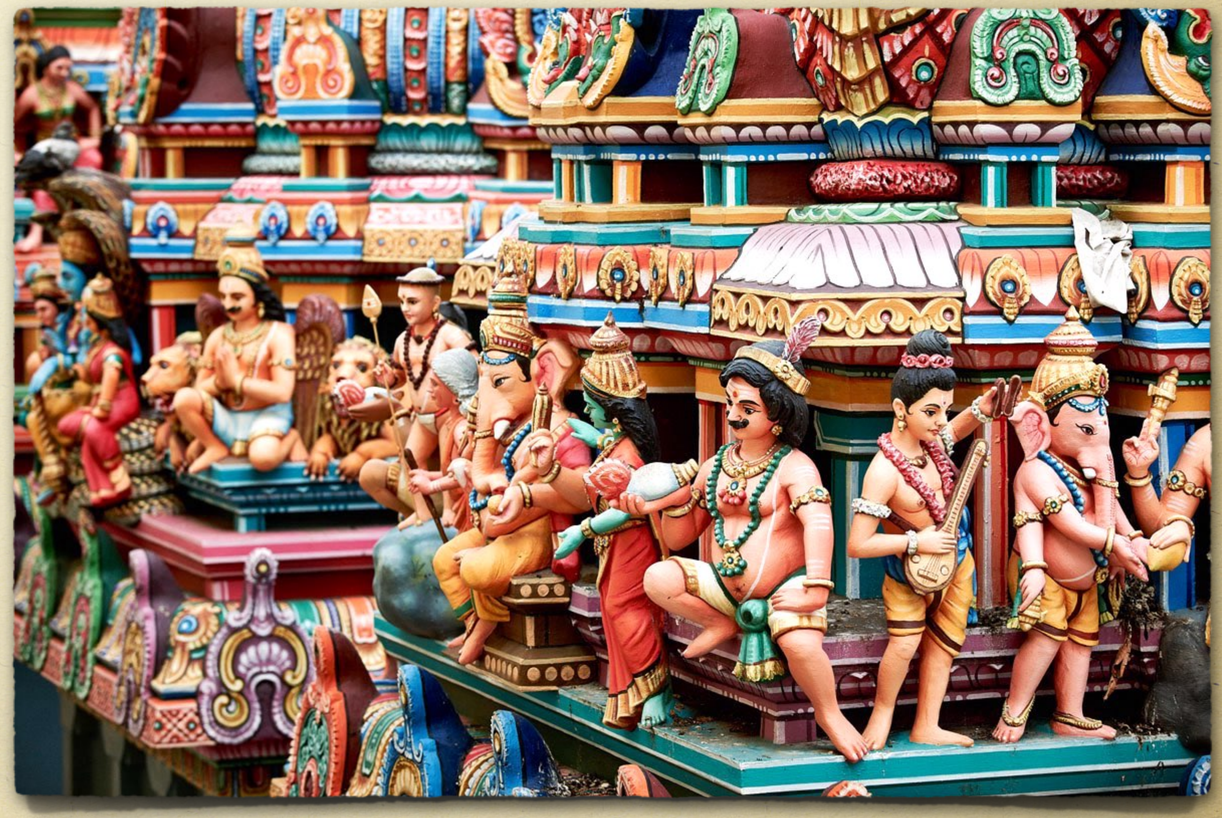


Culture and worship

They enjoy a rich family life and ageless traditions of culture.

They honour gurus, saints and sages.

They worship many Gods, who are grand helpers to the Supreme Being



Hinduism is like a banian tree.

AThe three pillars of Sanatana Dharma are its scriptures, temples and gurus.

Today Hinduism is like a great banyan tree, whose limbs represent the many variations of this ancient faith.

The four main branches, or denominations, are Saivism, Vaishnavism, Shaktism and Smartism.



Like four independent religions

Each has a multitude of guru lineages, religious leaders, priesthoods, sacred literature, monastic communities, schools, pilgrimage centers and tens of thousands of temples.

Since Hinduism has no one central authority, these are like four independent religions sharing a vast common heritage of history, culture and belief.



Gurudeva explains…

Hinduism is a mystical religion, leading devotees to personally experience its eternal truths within themselves, finally reaching the pinnacle of consciousness where man and God are forever one.



QUESTIONS
Lesson 5



5.1 **Check the items below that are true about Hinduism**

□ A. Is the ancient religion of India
□ B. Though popular in ancient times, it only has 5 Million followers today
□ C. Has no founder
□ D. Stretches back unknown thousands of years in India
□ E. Is based on the Bible
□ F. Is called Sanatana Dharma which means “eternal faith.”

5.2 **Enter the letter from list below of A - C for the correct meaning of the term.**

___ Karma
___ Dharma
___ Reincarnation

(A) The natural process of birth, death and rebirth
(B) The principle of cause and effect, action and reaction
(C) Divine order, righteousness and duty

5.3 **Check the four central beliefs of Hinduism:**

□ A. Karma
□ B. The practice of meditation
□ C. One Supreme God who created the world and abides everywhere within it □ D. Dharma
□ E. Temple worship
□ Reincarnation

5.4 **In Hinduism belief alone is enough to propel us forward on the path.**

□ True
□ False

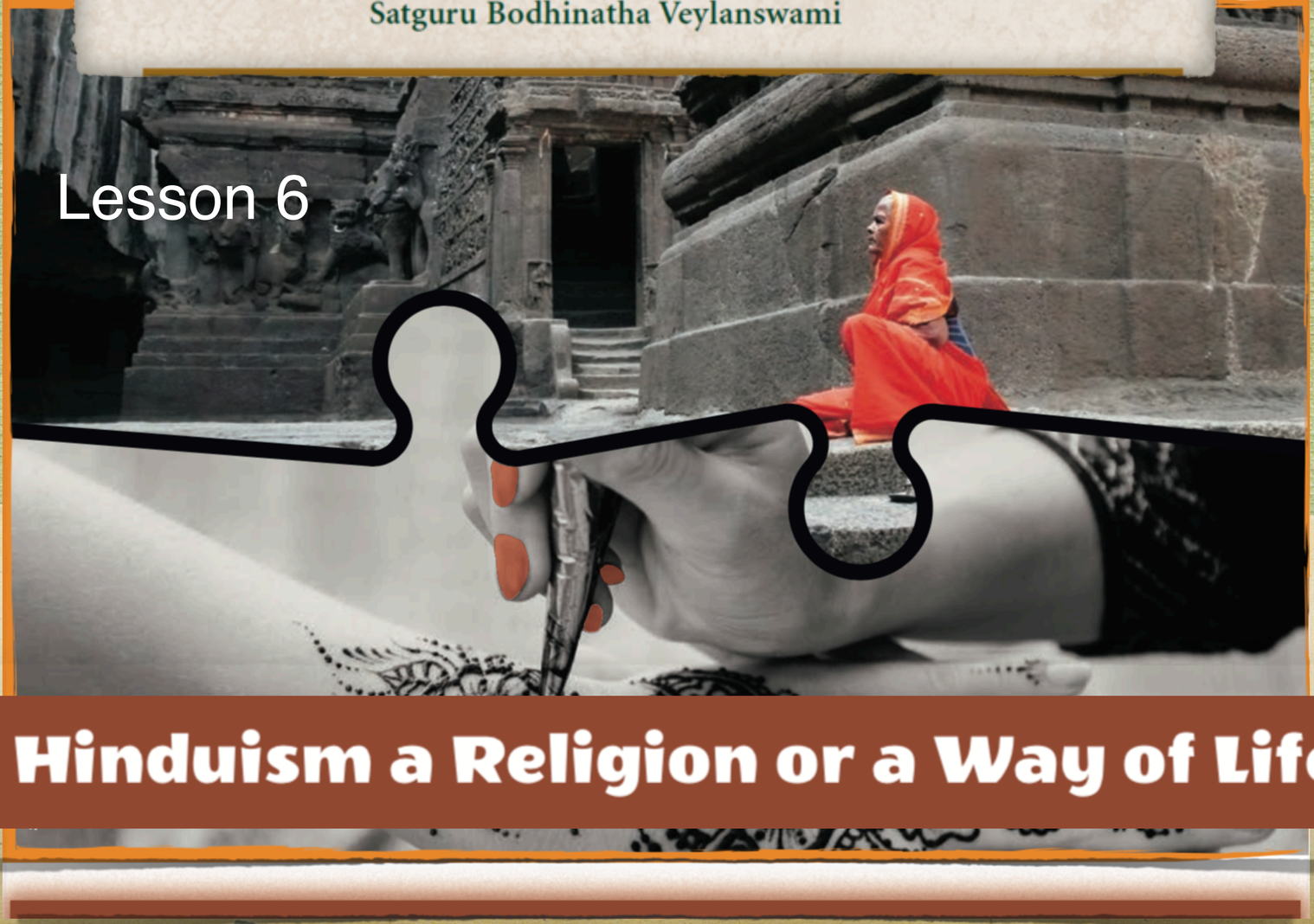
5.5 **The meaning of denomination in this lesson is:**
(Check the correct answer)

□ A. The face value of a banknote, coin or postage stamp
□ B. The various groups within a religion which hold varying beliefs
□ C. The exercise of control or influence over someone
□ D. The territory of a government

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Lesson 6

Is Hinduism a Religion or a Way of Life?

Religion or way of life?



Hinduism is a religion, and it is a way of life.

Both ideas are true.

It is a highly spiritual way of life, which is the perfect definition of religion!

What does ‘religion’ mean?

The word *religion* means a particular system of faith and worship.

It comes from *religionem*, a Latin word meaning “respect for what is sacred, reverence for the Gods.”

In that sense, Hinduism is overqualified for the term.



No opposites…all life is spiritual

Unlike most religions, it does not divide life into secular and spiritual opposites.

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



India’s ancient faith.

Religion **is a powerful word in today’s world, one that we should freely use in describing India’s ancient faith.**

A related issue is the use of the term *Hinduism.*

This is the broad name by which Sanatana Dharma is known and honored in the world



Hinduism no longer misunderstood.

For centuries Hinduism was misunderstood by the West and wrongly disparaged.

But that has changed.

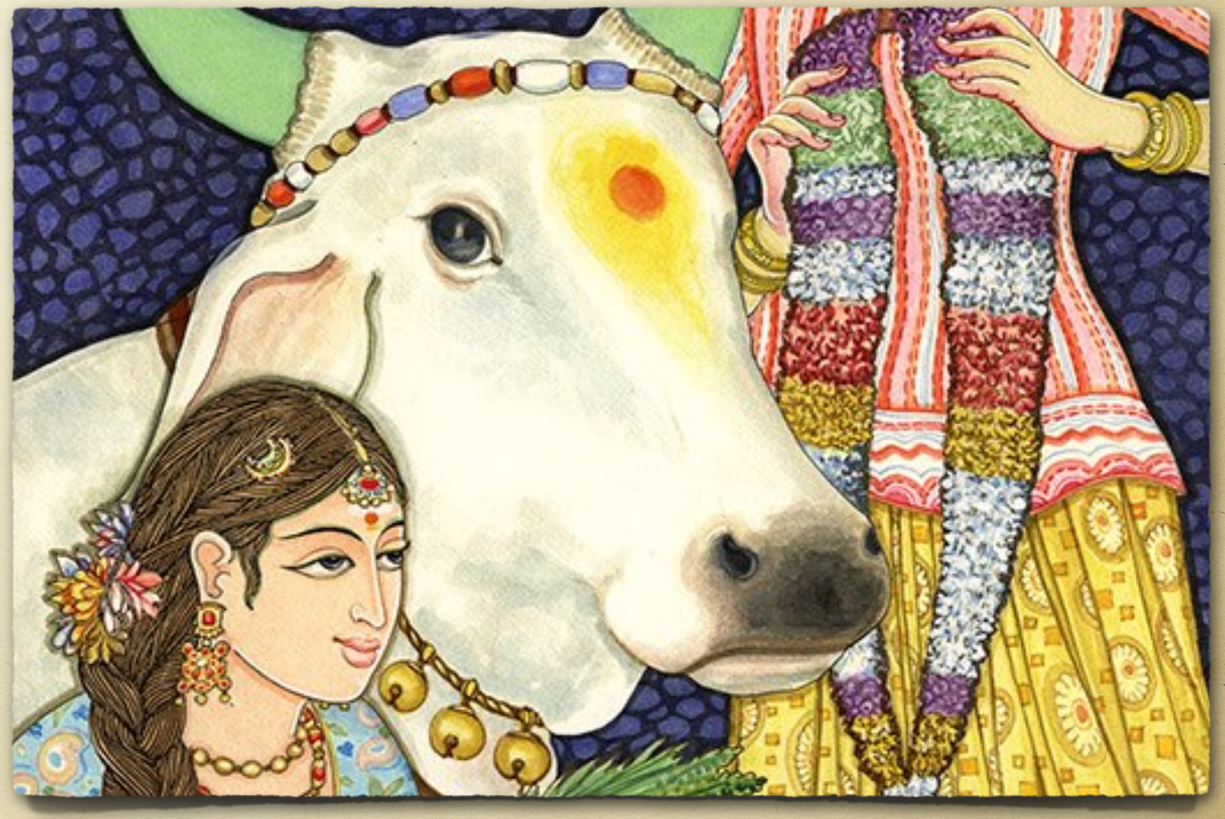
Entering the 21st century, Hinduism is recognized as the most compassionate, mystical and enlightened faith on the planet.



It teaches open-mindedness and non-injury.

Its messages of peace, non- injury and openmindedness are urgently needed in this time of strife and bigotry.

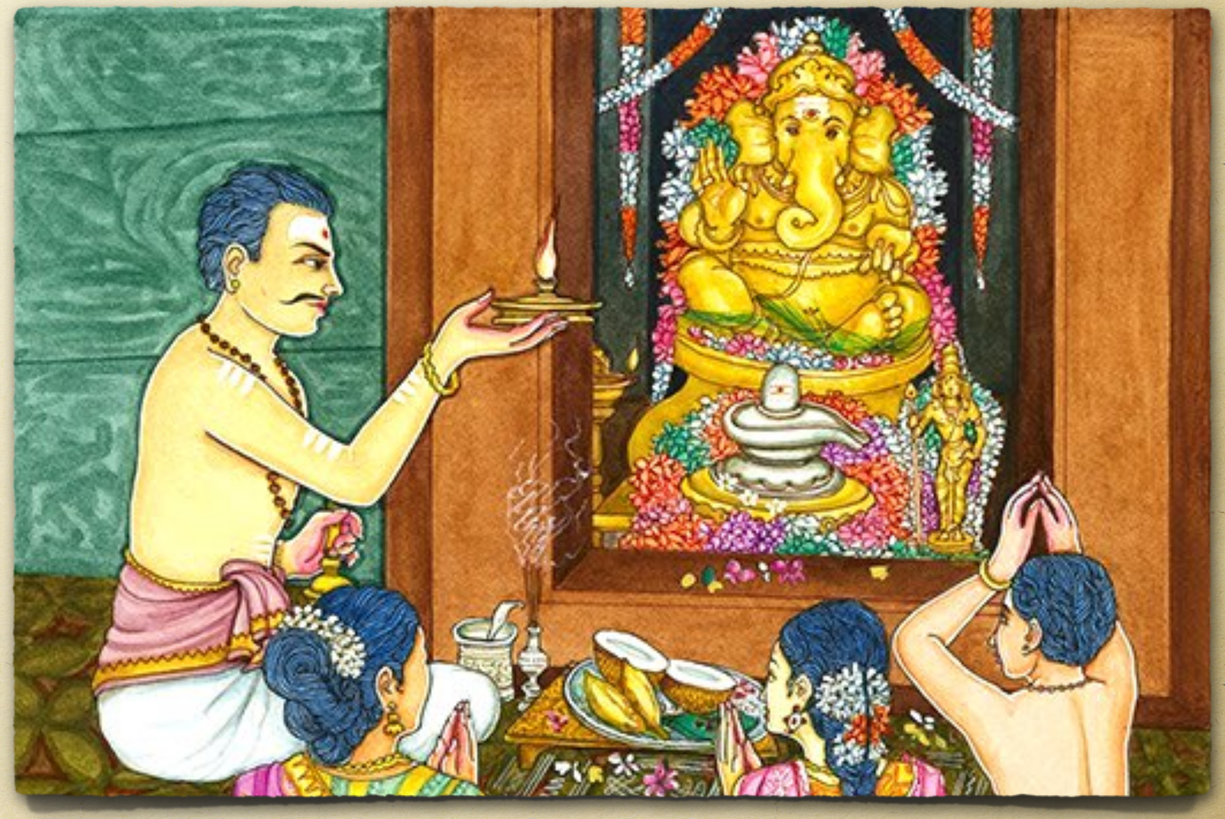
These values are being appreciated, as are Hinduism’s sciences of yoga, vastu, jyotisha and ayurveda.



The word ‘Hinduism’ cannot be discarded.

If we discard the name *Hinduism* or call it “just a way of life,” we remove it from the grand, esteemed position that it holds and deserves as a major world religion.

We should not do that.



United under the Hindu banner.

United together under the Hindu banner, our family of faiths enjoys the many protections given to all religions, and we have a respected, unified voice to the media, government, boards of education and planning departments.



I am a Hindu

Hindus themselves are becoming more confident about their faith, proud to declare, “I am a Hindu.”



Hindu youth in international universities…

In universities the world over, Hindu youth stand proudly side by side with students of other religions.

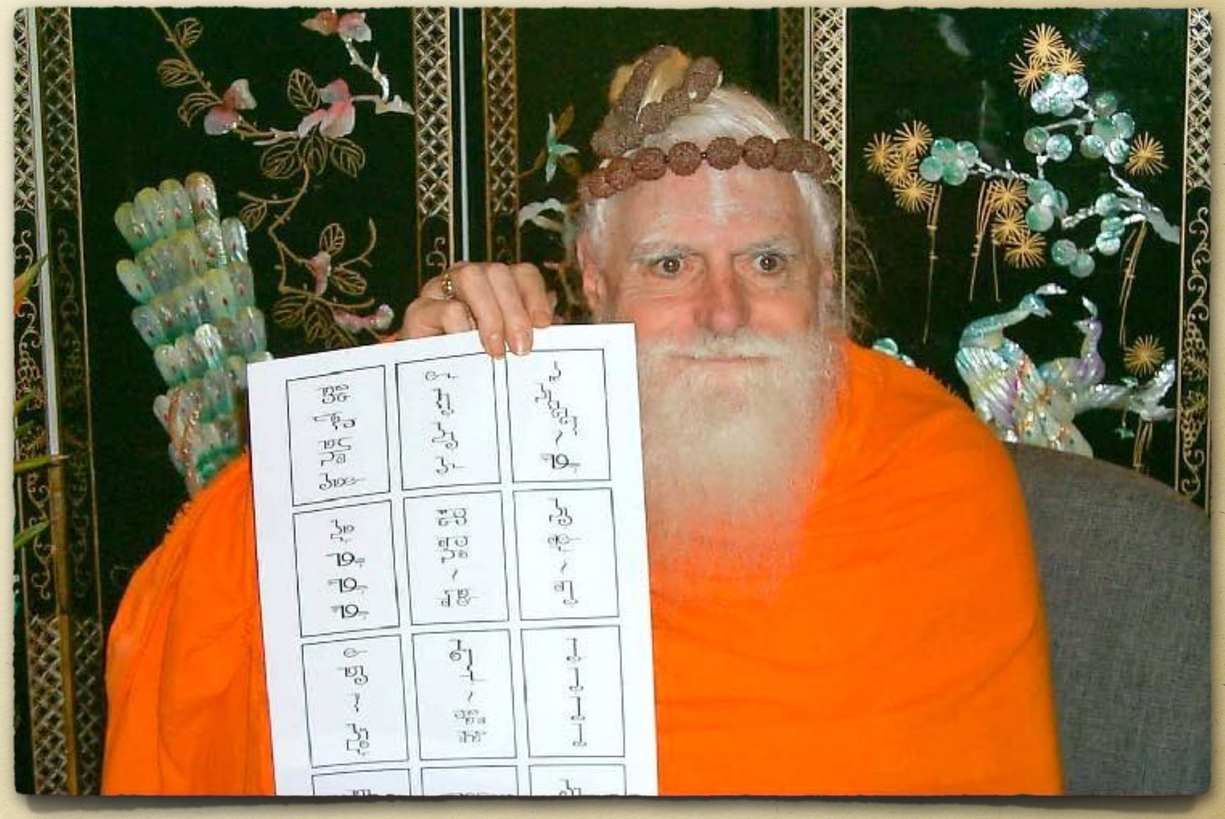
That can’t happen if we avoid the name *Hinduism*.

And it can’t happen if we give up the word *religion*



Gurudeva explains…

Dharma means merit, morality, good conduct, religious duty and the way of life of the wise person.



QUESTIONS
Lesson 6



6.1 **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

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

☐ True
☐ False

6.3 **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

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

☐ True
☐ False

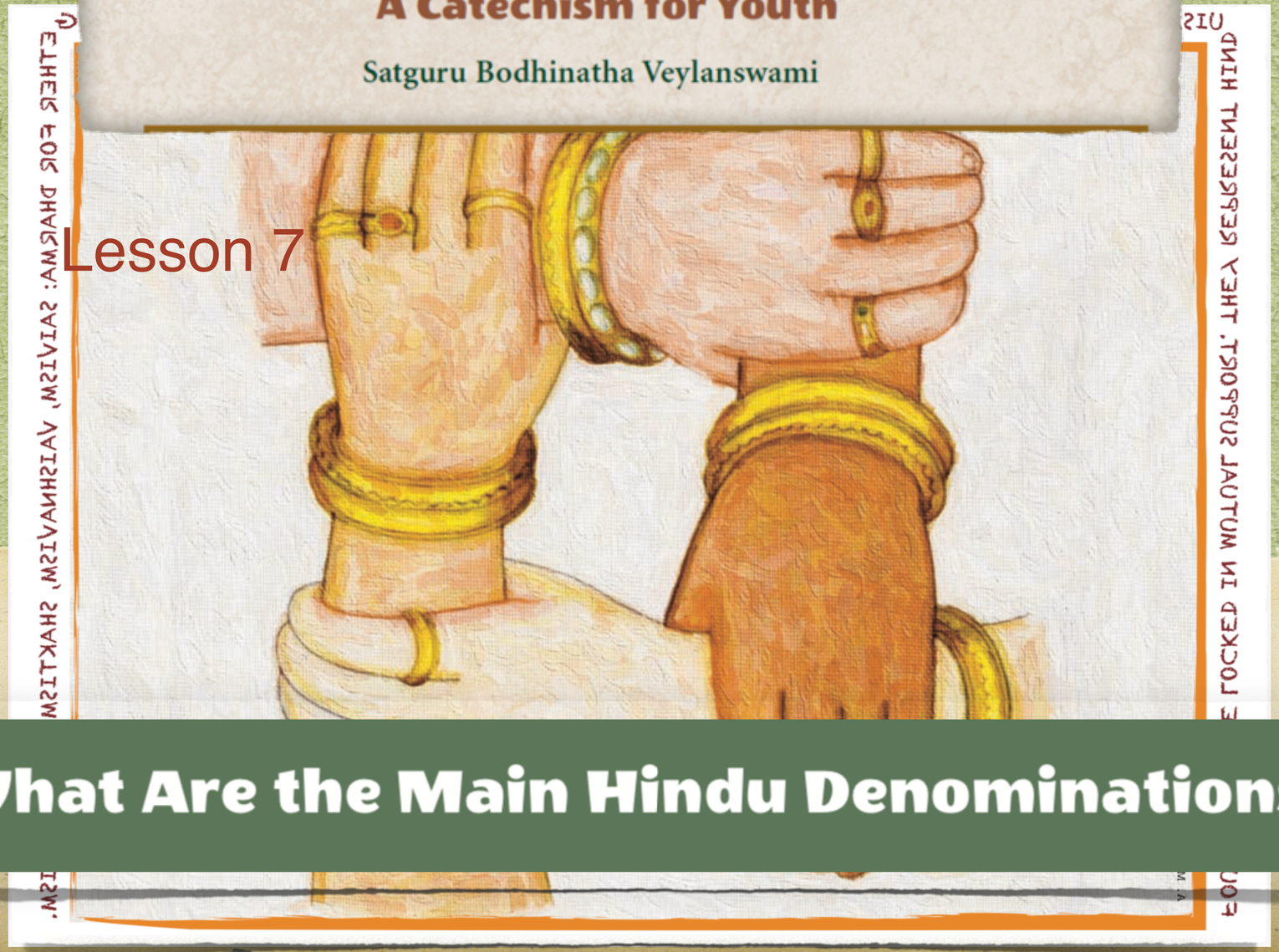
6.5 **Hindus as a religious community enjoy many protections and a respected unified voice.**

☐ True
☐ False

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Lesson 7

What Are the Main Hindu Denominations?

India’s ancient faith ?



Hinduism’s primary denominations are Saivism, Vaishnavism, Shaktism and Smartism.

For two centuries Western scholars have struggled to understand India’s faith.

Varied beliefs and practices!

They found it so vast and varied in its beliefs, practices and ways of worship that they could not comprehend or describe it.

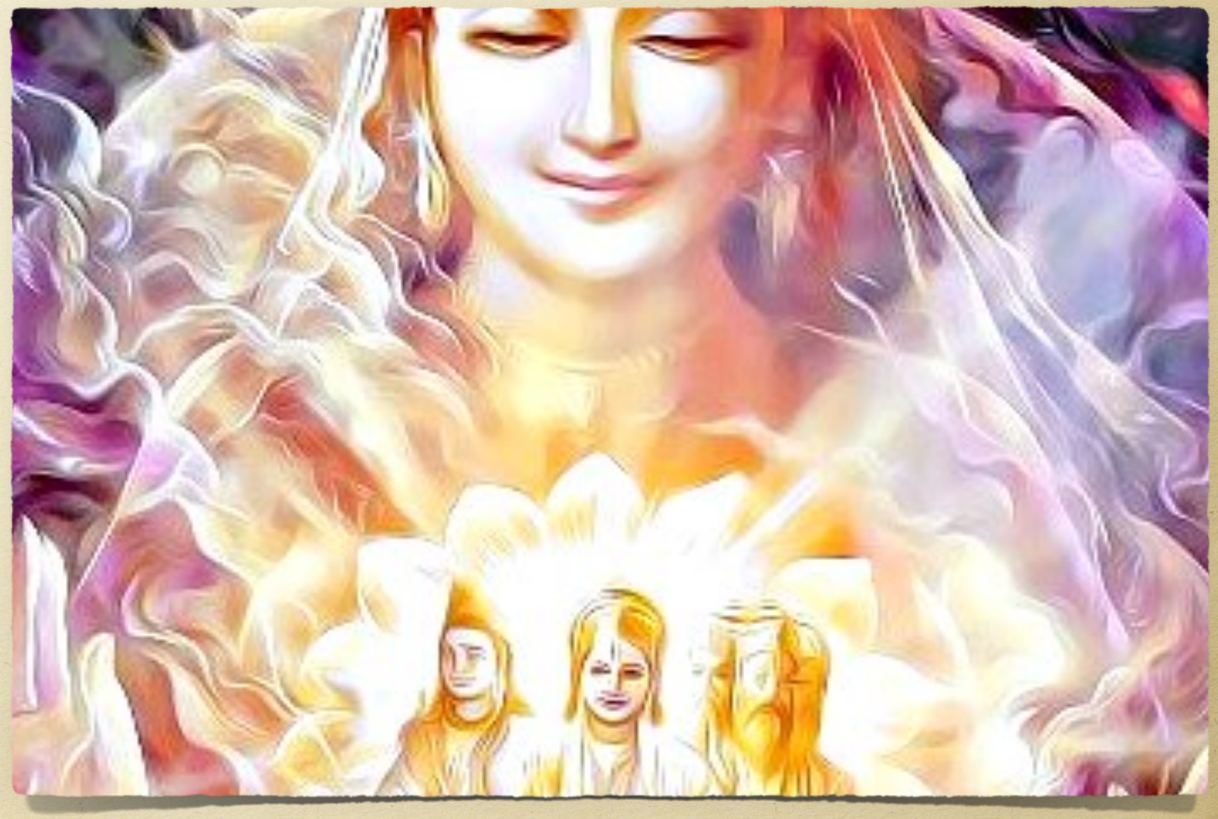
What they didn’t realize is that India’s Sanatana Dharma, or eternal faith, is a family of religions with four principal denominations.



A Supreme God by different names

For example, seeing so many Deities, scholars wrote incorrectly that Hindus have no Supreme God.

In fact, Hindus all worship a one Supreme Being, though by different names.

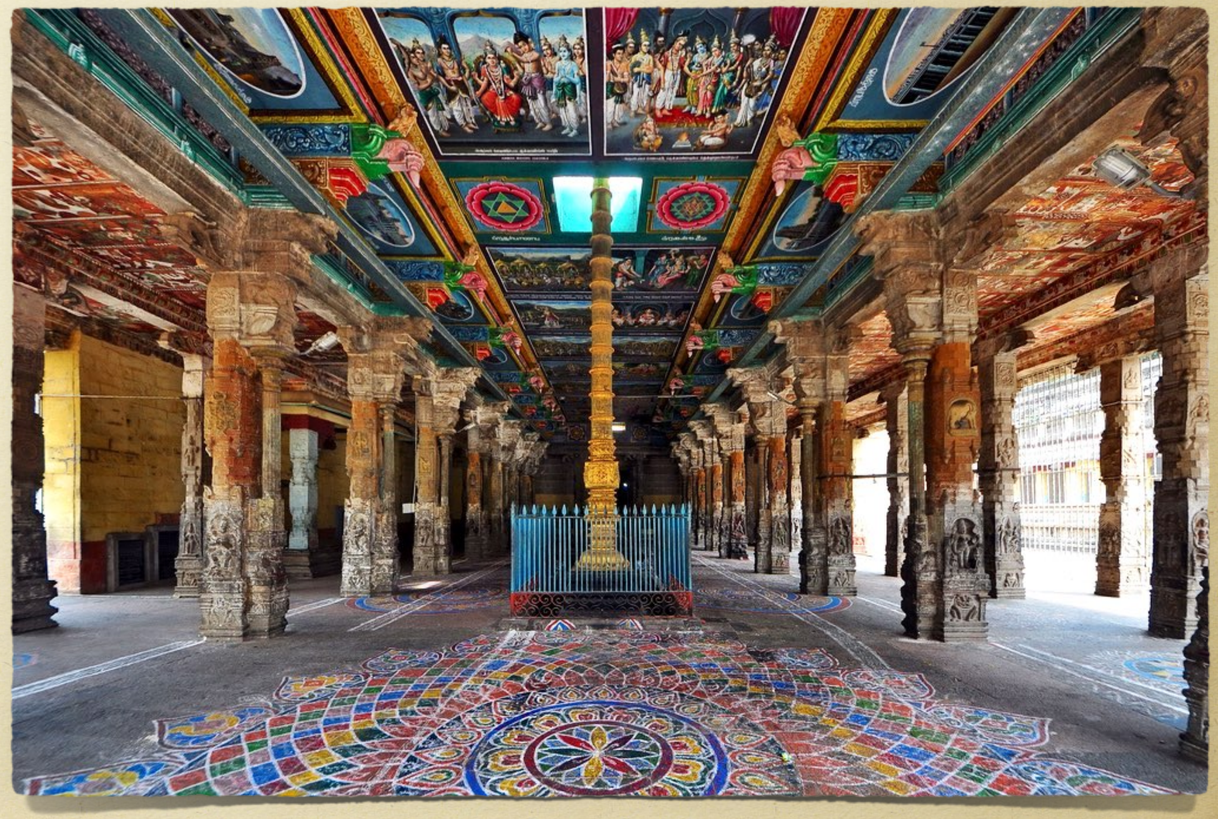


Who is the Supreme God?

For Vaishnavites, Lord Vishnu is God.

For Saivites, God is Siva. For Shaktas, Goddess Shakti is supreme.

For Smartas, who are the most liberal Hindus, the choice of Deity is left to the devotee.names.

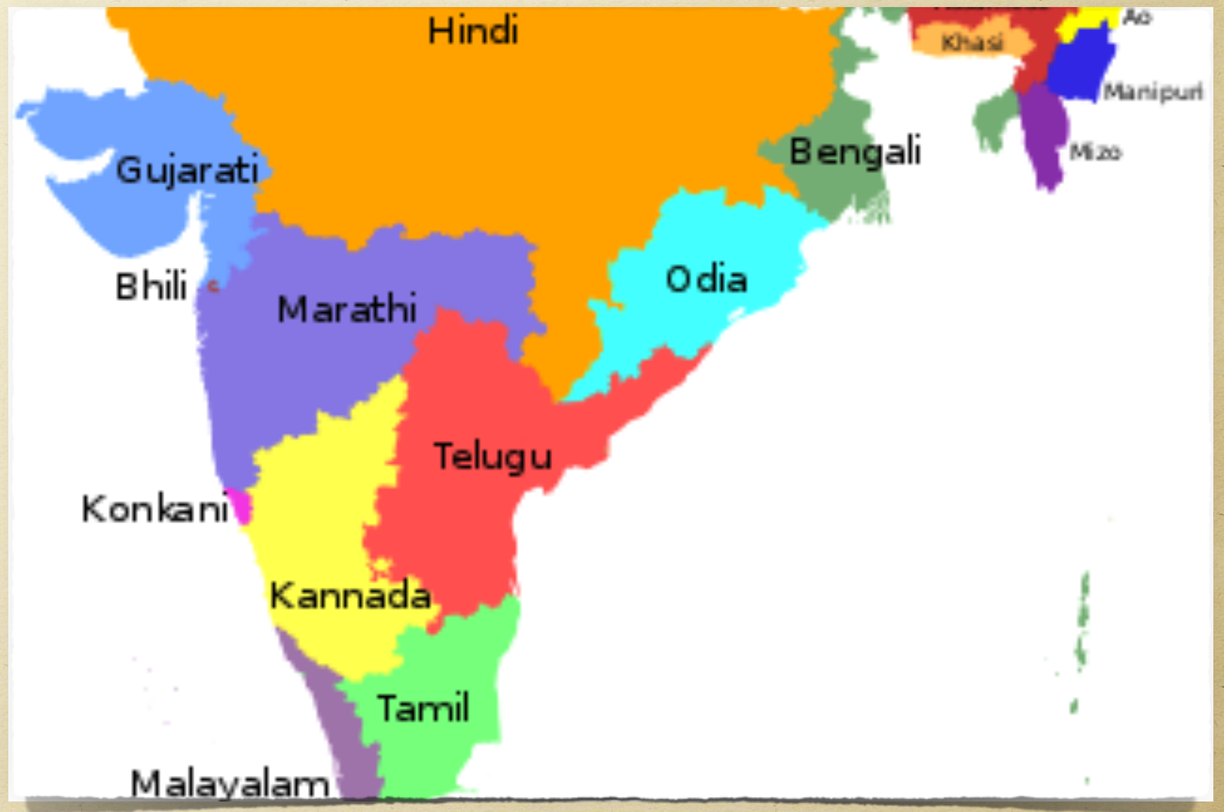


Geographical and linguistic factors

These strains arose in different geographical and linguistic regions.

Each has its own beliefs, scriptures, religious leaders and monastic traditions.

Each has its own temples, festivals and ways of worship.



Varied forms of worship

Some are more focused on devotion and temple worship.

Others stress yoga, mantra and scriptural study.

Each has hundreds of millions of followers.

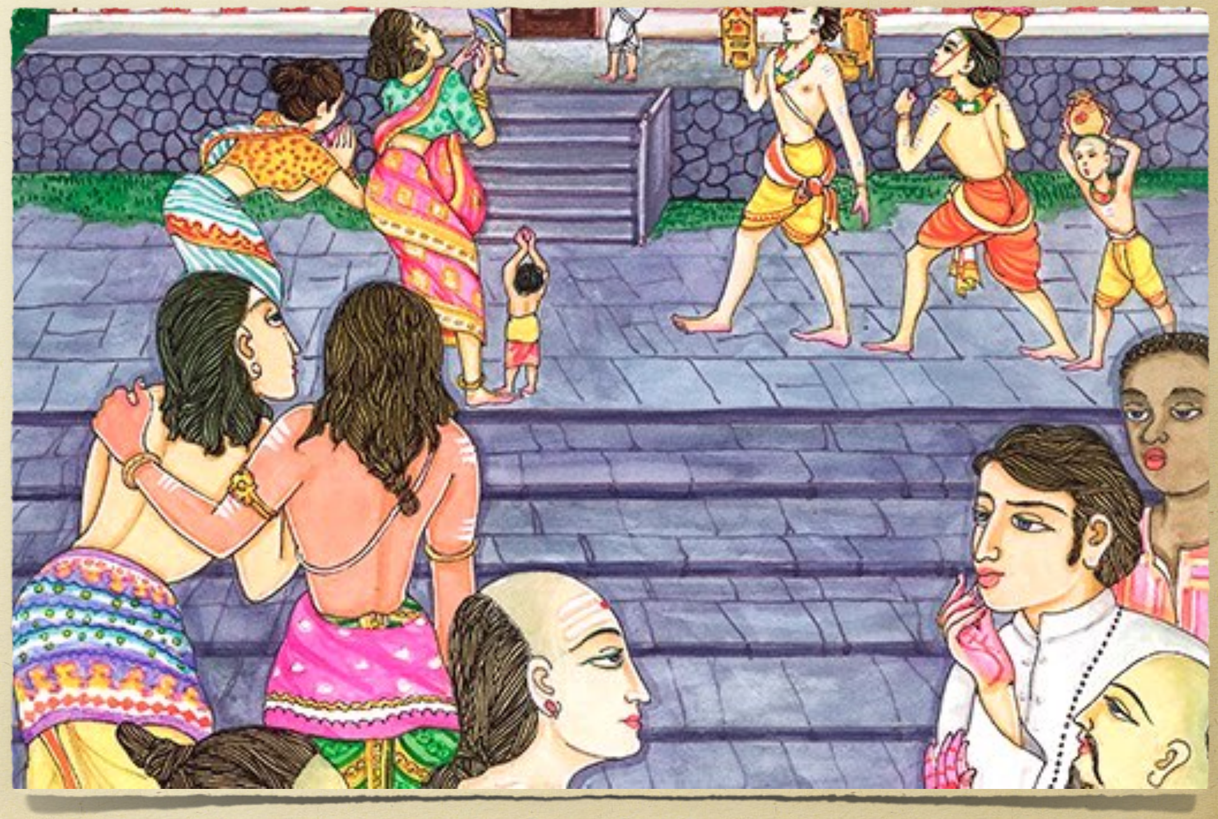


Every Hindu accept the Vedas

All four accept the authority of the *Vedas* and the basic beliefs of karma, dharma and reincarnation.

Much of their culture and tradition is the same.

Most Hindus follow the same lineage as their parents and grandparents.



Saivite respects all Hindu paths

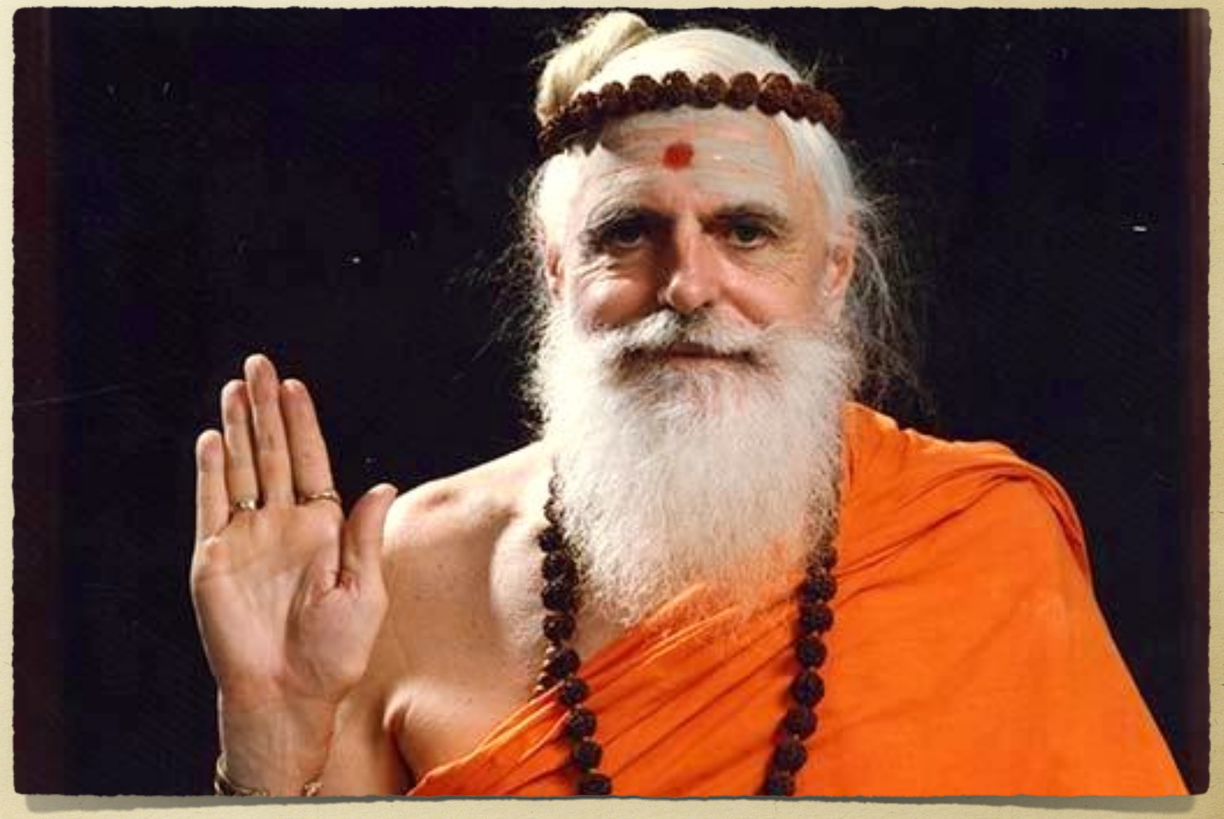
As Saivites, we respect all Hindu paths and we may occasionally visit the temples of other Hindu groups.

We join in their festivals and honor their religious leaders, but we hold firmly to our Saiva path.



Gurudeva explains…

Whatever our background, we can and we must maintain our sectarian roots and heritage, cultivate our differences and become strong within them.



QUESTIONS
Lesson 7



7.1 **Understanding that Hinduism has four principal denominations helps one comprehend and describe it.**

☐ True
☐ False

7.2 **Hindus all worship a one Supreme Being, though by different names.**

☐ True
☐ False

7.3 **Enter the letter from list below of A - D for the correct Deity for the denomination.**

___ ForVaishnavites
___ For Saivites
___ For Shaktas
___ For Smartas

(A) Goddess Shakti is Supreme.
(B) The choice of Deity is left to the devotee.
(C) Lord Vishnu is God.
(D) God is Siva.

7.4 **These four denominations (Check the items that are true)**

☐A. Hold identical beliefs
☐ B. Have their own temples, festivals and ways of worship
☐ C. All stress the practice of yoga
☐D. All accept the authority of the Veda
☐E. Have much of the same culture

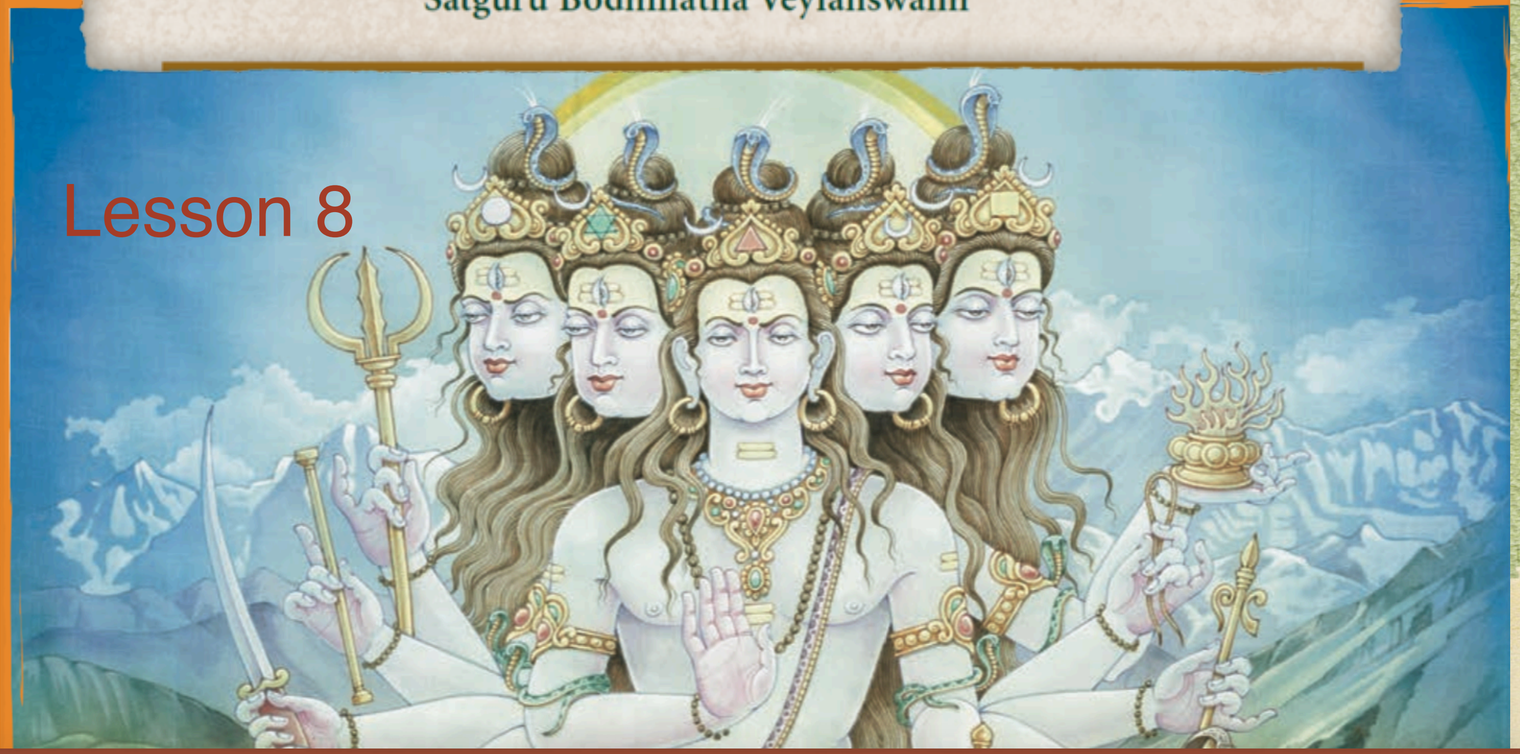
7.5 **As Saivites we**
(Check the items that are true)

☐ A. Never visit the temples of other Hindu groups
☐ B. May occasionally visit the temples of other Hindu groups
☐ C. Do not join in their festivals and honor their religious leaders
☐ D. Do on occasion join in their festivals and honor their religious leaders
☐ E. Hold firmly to our Saiva path

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Lesson 8

What Is Saivite Hinduism?

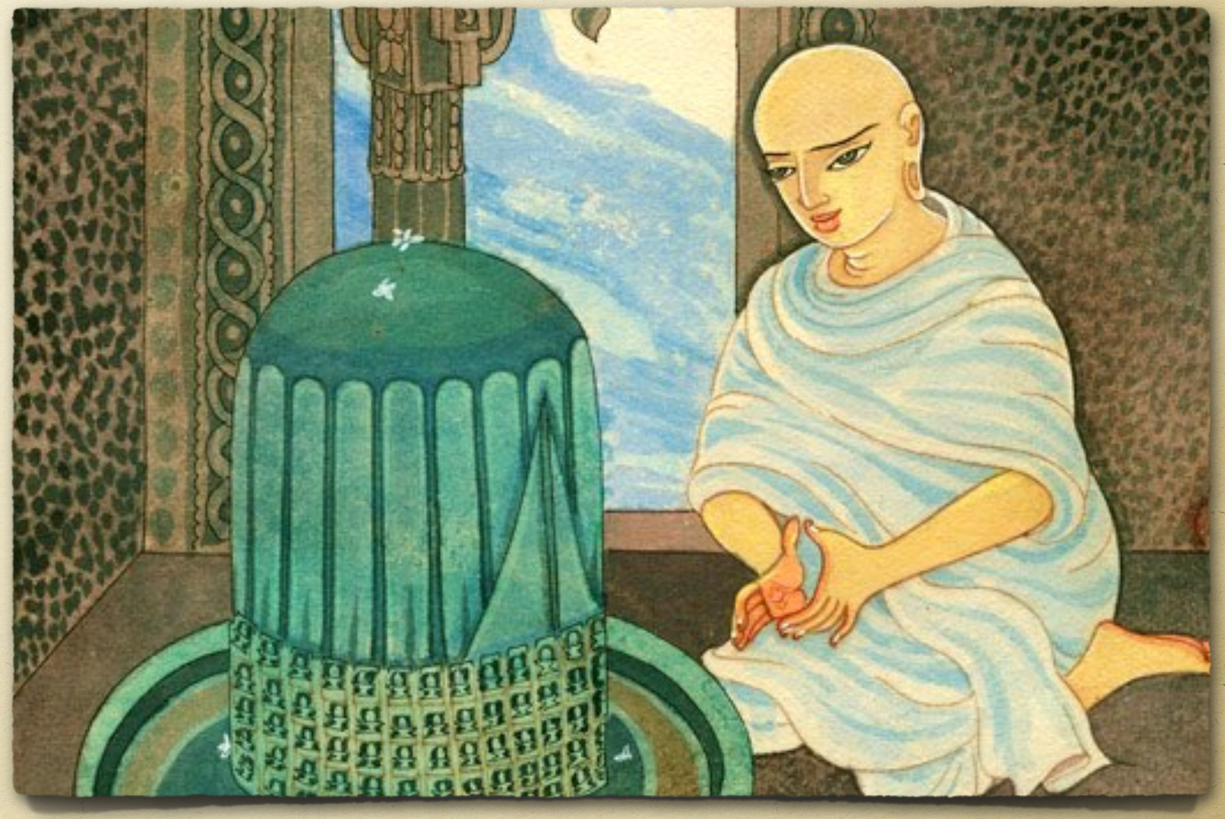
Saivism



Saivism is the world's oldest religion.

Worshipping God Siva

Worshiping 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:

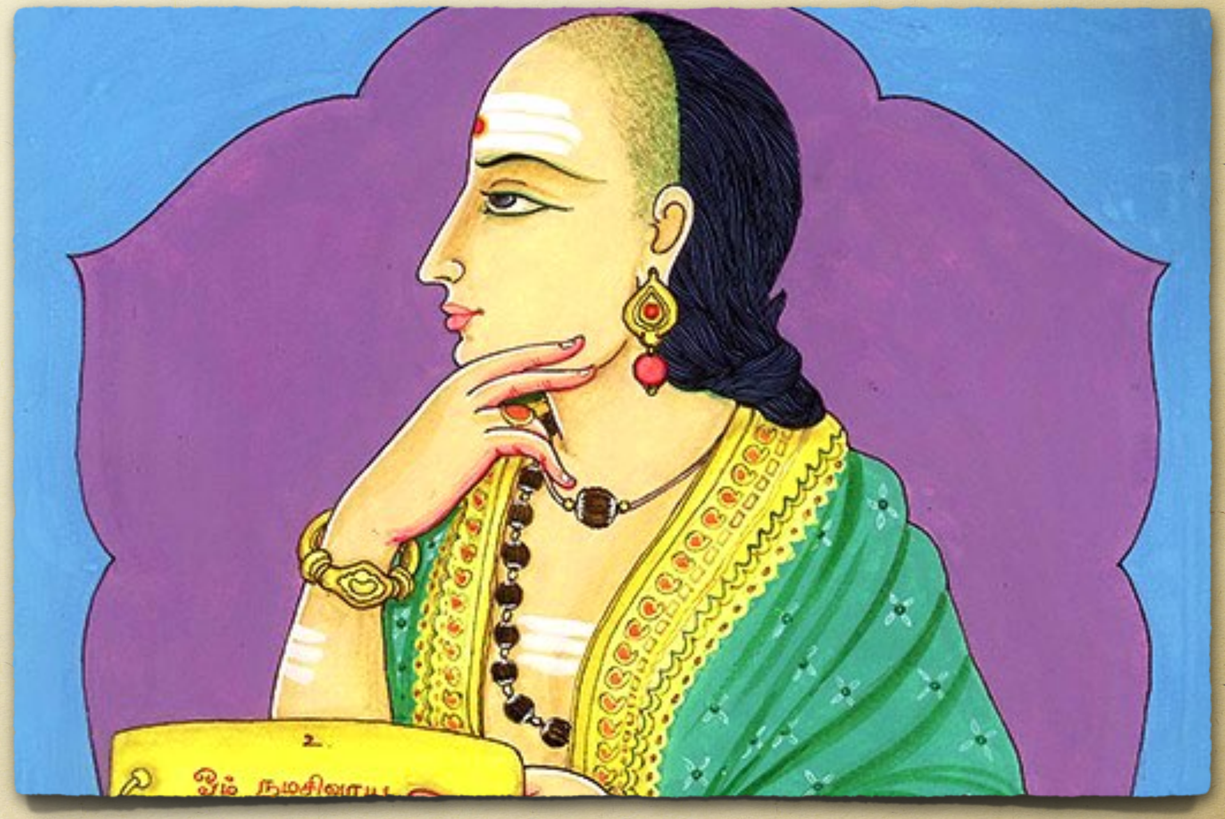
philosophically,
historically,
linguistically
geographically.



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, Parasite, 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



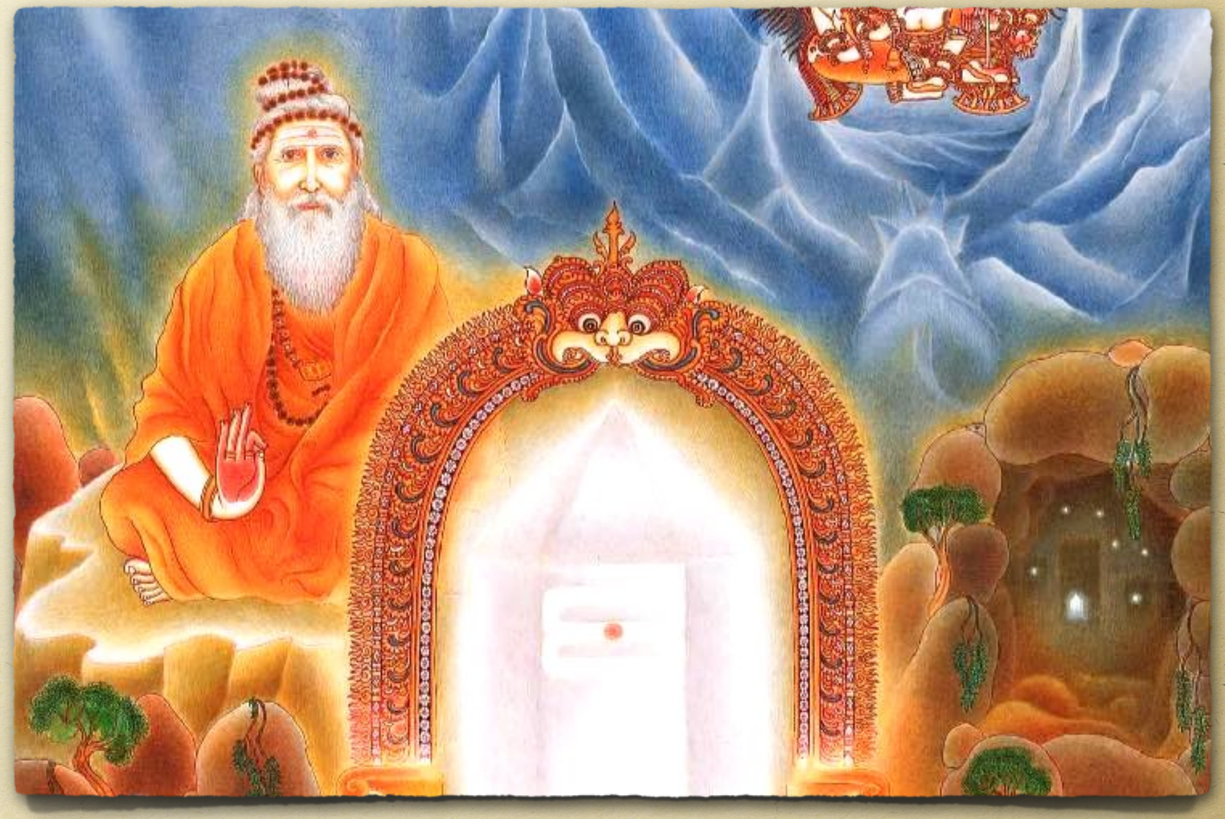
Gurudeva explains…

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

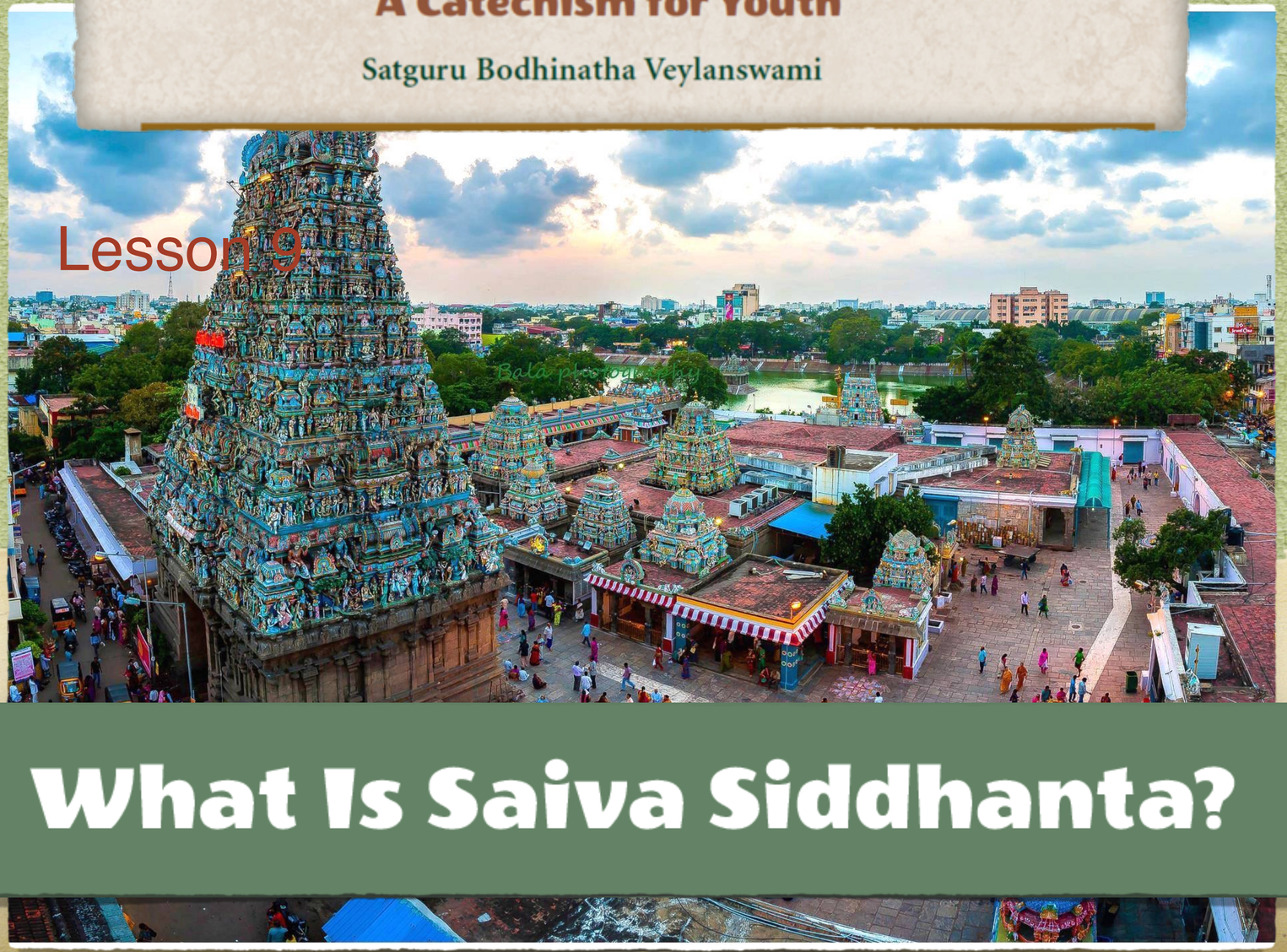
8.5 **A principal Agamic doctrine is the need for a satguru and initiation.**

☐ True
☐ False

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Lesson 9

What Is Saiva Siddhanta?

Saiva Siddhanta



Saiva Siddhanta is the name of our school of Hinduism

Saiva Siddhanta, the oldest form saivism

It is today the oldest, most vigorous and widely practiced of the six forms of Saivism.

It has many millions of devotees, tens of thousands of active temples and dozens of living monastic and ascetic traditions.

Saiva Siddhanta once enjoyed a glorious presence throughout India.

Today it is strongest within the Tamil traditions of South India, Sri Lanka, Malaysia and elsewhere.



Tamil Saivism

In fact, it is sometimes referred to simply as Tamil Saivism.



Pluralistic school of Meykandar

Today there are two primary schools of Saiva Siddhanta.

One is the pluralistic school of Meykandar, which holds that God, soul and world are eternally separate.



Monistic school of Tirumular

The other is the monistic school of Tirumular, which stresses the ultimate oneness of man and God.

We follow Tirumular's lineage, which is specifically called Shuddha Saiva Siddhanta.



For both schools, Siva is All.

For both schools, Siva is All, and His divine, manifest energy, Shakti, is inseparable from Him.

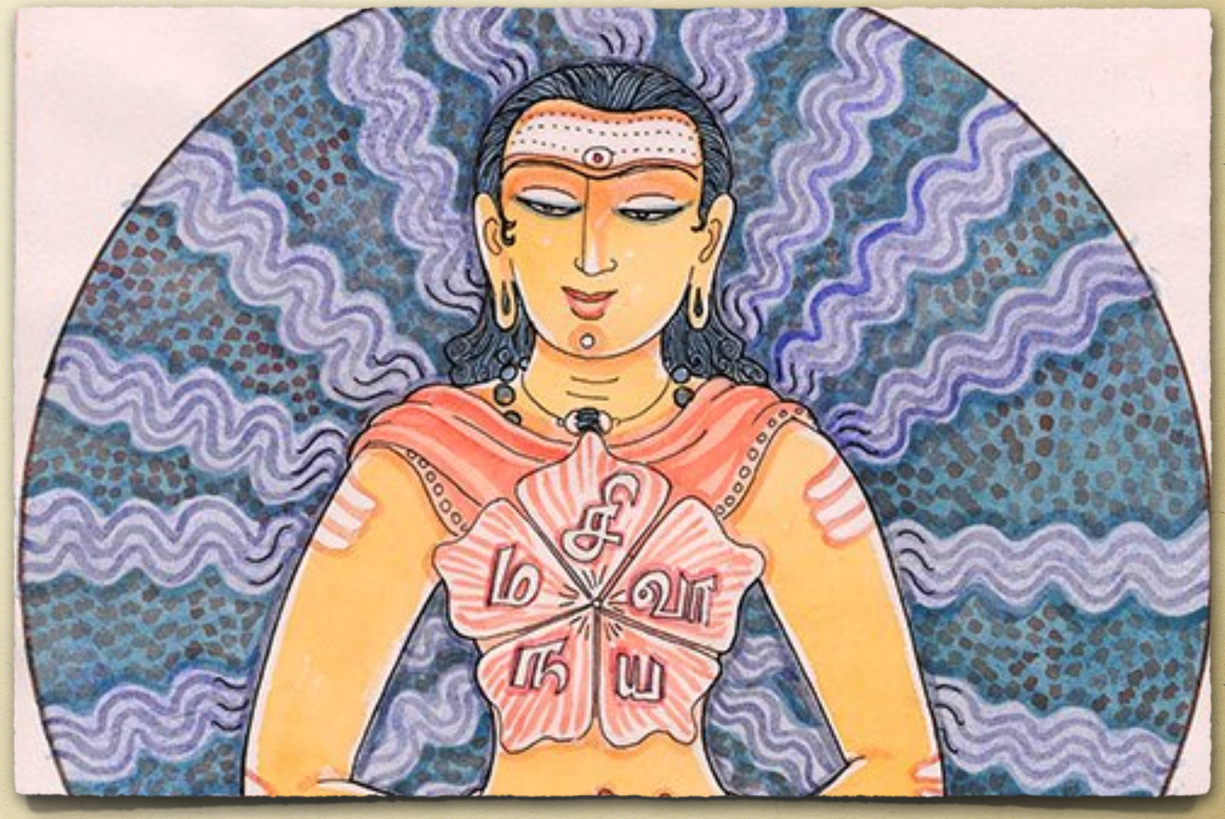
In temples we often see Siva and Shakti enshrined as two separate beings, a divine couple, but in truth they are one.



For both schools, Siva is All.

We worship Ganesha and Murugan as great Lords who serve their creator, God Siva.

We chant the holy mantra Namasivaya and we wear rudraksha beads and holy ash...



Saivite saints,Living Guru, Sivalinga…

We revere the many Saivite saints.

We believe it is necessary to have a living guru.

We cherish the holy Sivalinga, keep company (sangam) with other devout seekers, and revere the great many Siva temples.



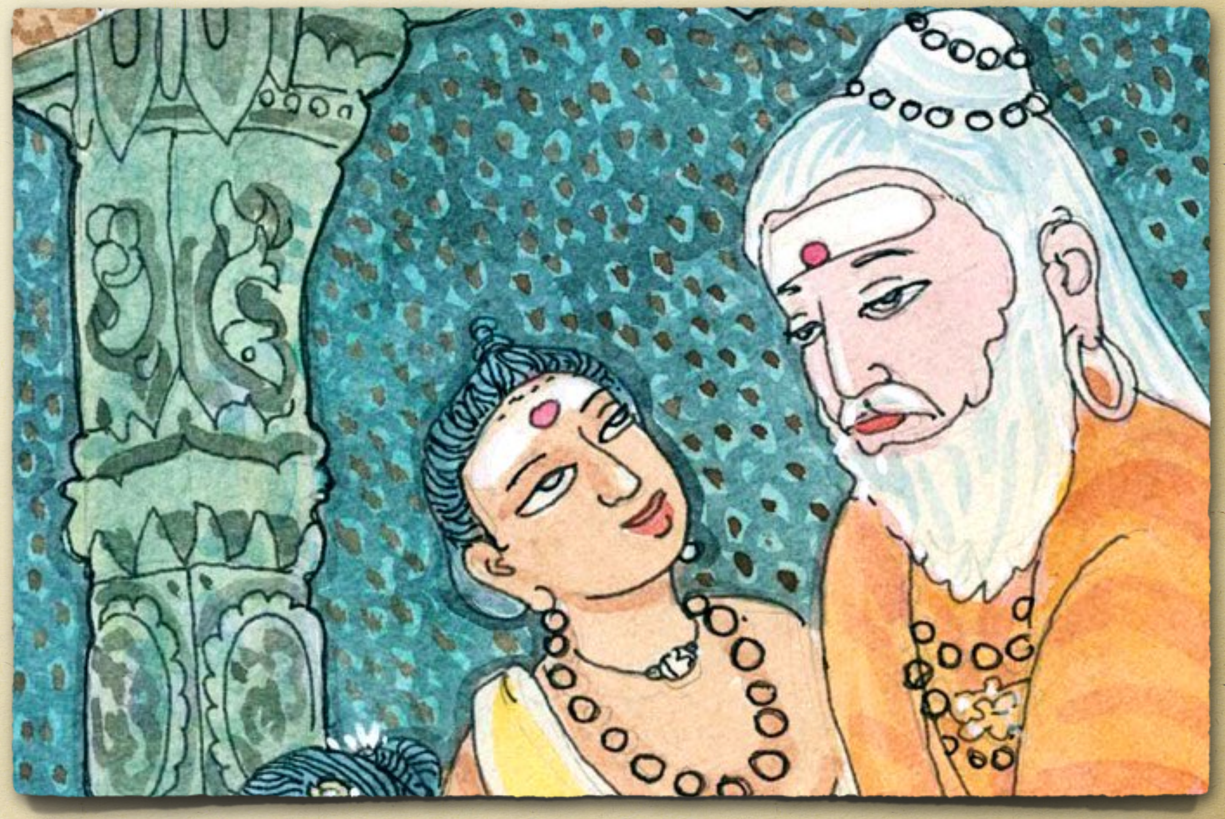
Essence of Saiva Siddhanta

These four—guru, Lingam, sangam (fellowship) and valipadu (worship) - are the essence of Saiva Siddhanta as found in ancient Sanskrit and Tamil literature.



Gurudeva says…

Saivism—and most especially the traditions and philosophy expressed in Saiva Siddhanta—is more able to provide for mankind's resurgent demands for direct spiritual awakening and enlightened living than any other religion on the planet.



QUESTIONS for Lesson 9

9.1 Saiva Siddhanta
(Check the items that are true)

☐ A. Is the name of our school of Hinduism
☐ B. Is today the least practiced form of Saivism
☐ C. In India never existed outside of Tamil Nadu
☐ D. Is sometimes referred to simply as Tamil Saivism
☐ E. Means “the final, or established, conclusions of Saivism”

9.2 Today there are three primary schools of Saiva Siddhanta.

☐ True
☐ False

9.3 If the concept is of the Meykandar School enter an”M”. If the concept is of the Tirumular school enter a “T”.

___ God, soul and world are eternally separate
___ Monistic
___ Ultimate oneness of man and God
___ Pluralistic

9.4 Check the items in the list that are not part of Saiva Siddhanta

☐ A. The worship of Lord Ganesha
☐ B. The worship of Lord Krishna
☐ C. The worship of Lord Murugan
☐ D. The mantra Namah Sivaya
☐ E. The mantra Hare Rama Hare Krishna
☐ F. We wear holy ash
☐ G. We revere the Vaishnava saints

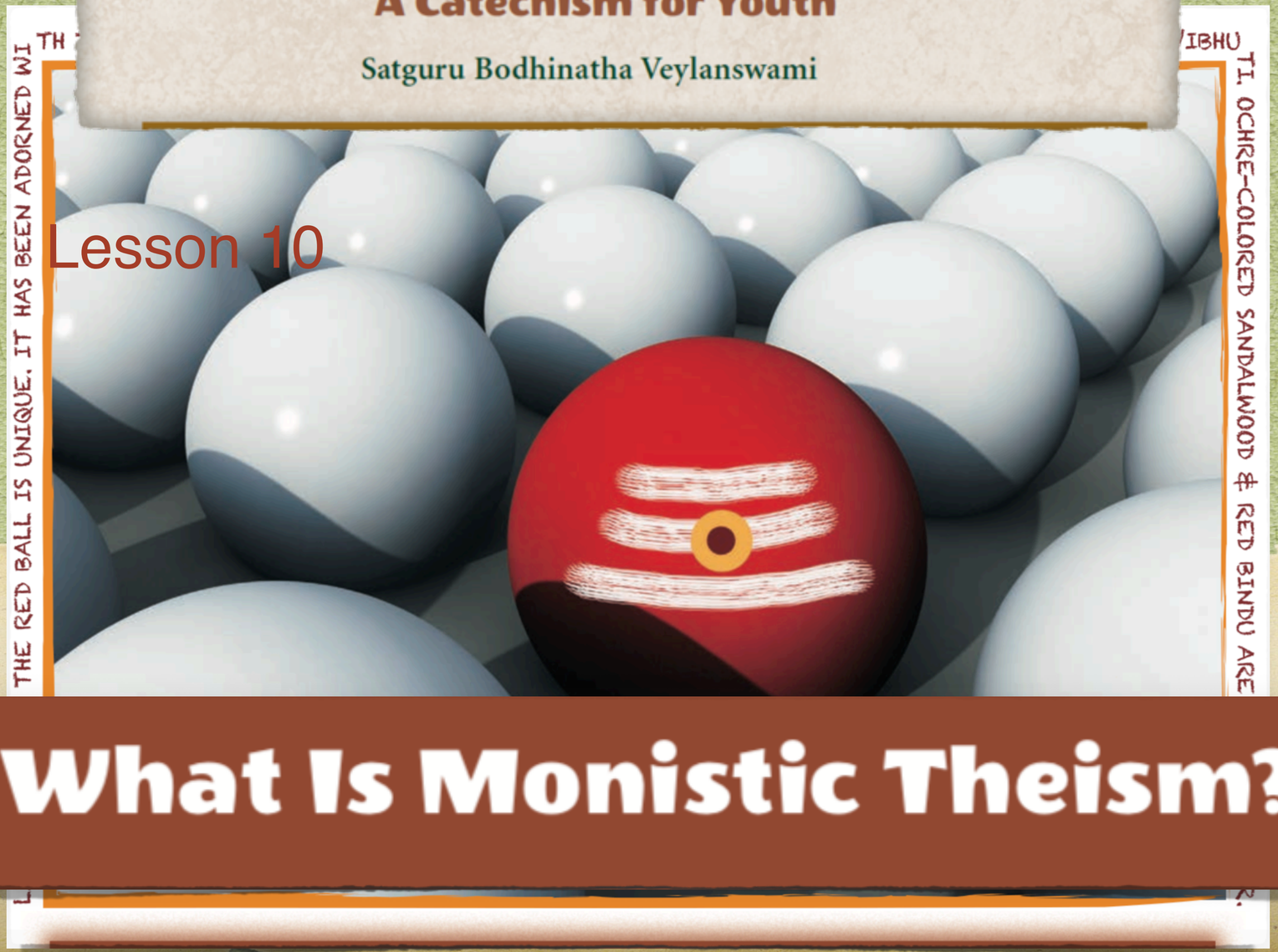
9.5 These three—guru, lingam and sangam—are the essence of Saiva Siddhanta..

☐ True
☐ False

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Lesson 10

What Is Monistic Theism?

What is monistic theism?



Monistic theism is the combination of two concepts: monism and theism.

Difference between monism and theism.

Monism is the doctrine that reality is a one whole. It holds that everything is God.

Theism is the belief that God exists as a loving, personal Lord and creator.



Our Saiva Siddhanta is monistic theism

These are like two sides of a coin, present in most Hindu systems.

Our Saiva Siddhanta philosophy is a form of monistic theism.

We see God as our personal Lord; as the essence of all that exists; and also as Absolute Being, Parasiva, beyond all form.



Theistic practices

In our theistic practices, we worship God and the Gods in the spirit of devotion and humble submission.



Monistic practices

In our monistic practices, we meditate deeply to experience the essence of our soul, which is identical with God Siva’s essence, which is present throughout the universe.



Siva has both aspects

Siva has both a monistic aspect and a theistic aspect.

Through our two-sided practice we honor and draw close to both.

The most complete and perfect path requires both monism and theism.



Dualism

The opposite of monism is dualism, which teaches that God and creation are separate realities.

Dualists believe that God, like a potter, creates the universe (a pot) from “clay,” cosmic matter which has always existed and is not part of Him.



Siva is all in all

In Saiva monism, Siva is all and in all: the potter, the clay and the resulting pot.



How do we worship Siva?

Some forms of Hindu monism do not include much theism.

Ours does. We worship Siva as the God of love, Parameshvara, Siva as creator, preserver and dissolver, Siva as separate from us, who loves us as His creation.

That is the theism part.

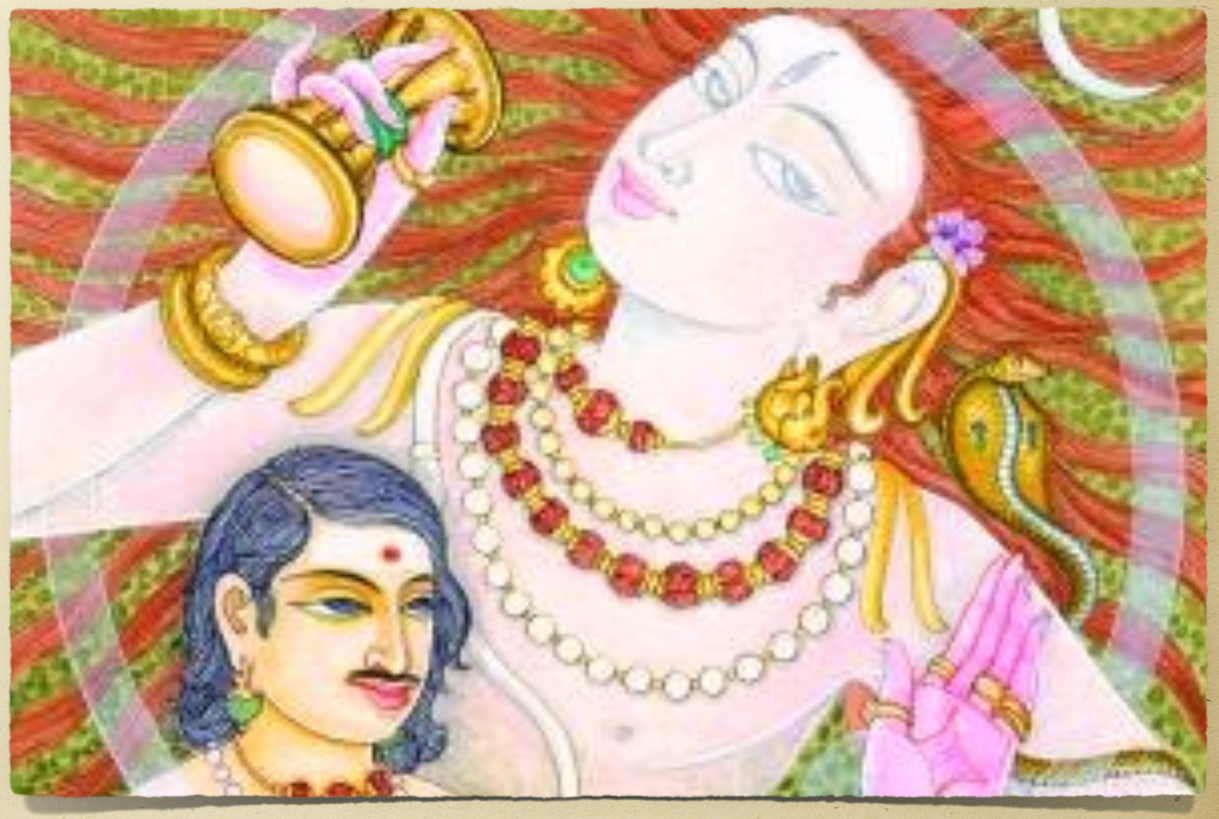


Siva is within us all.

Yet we also believe He is not separate from us.

He is within us as Parashakti, pure consciousness flowing through all form, and as Absolute Reality, Parasiva.

That is the monism part.



Gurudeva: Mountaintop perspective

Monists, from their mountaintop perspective, perceive a one reality in all things.

Dualists, from the foothills, see God, souls and world as eternally separate.

Monistic theism is the perfect reconciliation of these two views.



QUESTIONS for Lesson 10

10.1 **If the concept is part of monism enter an “M”. If the concept is part of theism enter a “T”.**

___ Reality is a one whole
___ God exists as a loving, personal Lord and creator
___ Everything is God

10.2 **In our monistic practices, we worship God and the Gods in the spirit of devotion and humble submission.**

☐ True
☐ False

10.3 **The most complete and perfect path requires**
(Check the correct answer)

☐A. Only monism
☐B. Both monism and theism
☐C. Only theism

10.4 **In the comparison to the potter, if the concept is part of monism enter an “M”. If the concept is part of dualism enter a “D”.**

___ The clay is not part of God

___ The clay is also God

10.5 **If the concept is part of monism enter an “M”. If the concept is part of theism enter a “T”.**

___ We worship Siva as the God of love

___ Siva is within us as pure consciousness and Absolute Reality