

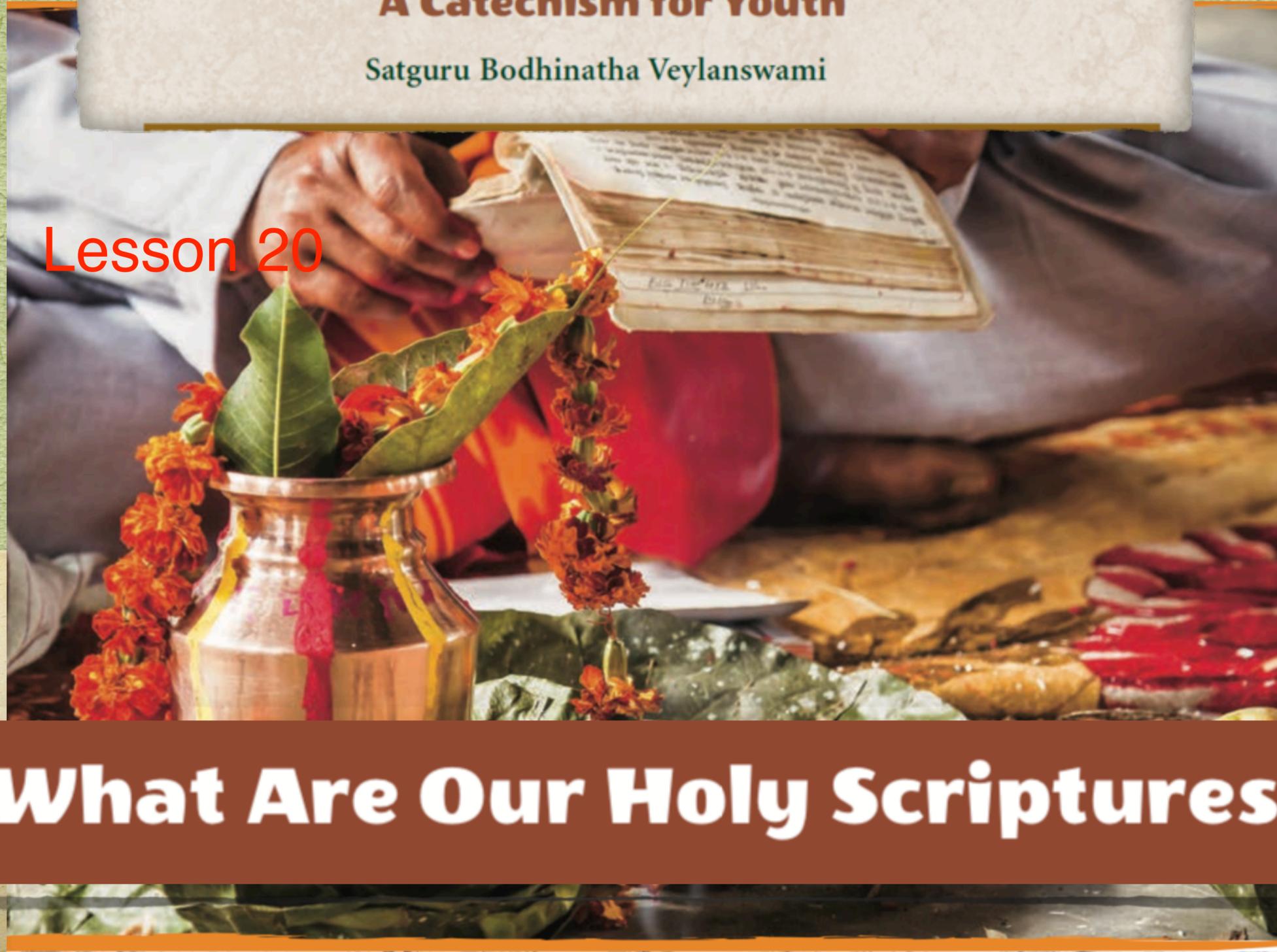
Path to Siva

A Catechism for Youth

Satguru Bodhinatha Veylanswami

Lesson 20

What Are Our Holy Scriptures?



What are Our holiest texts ?

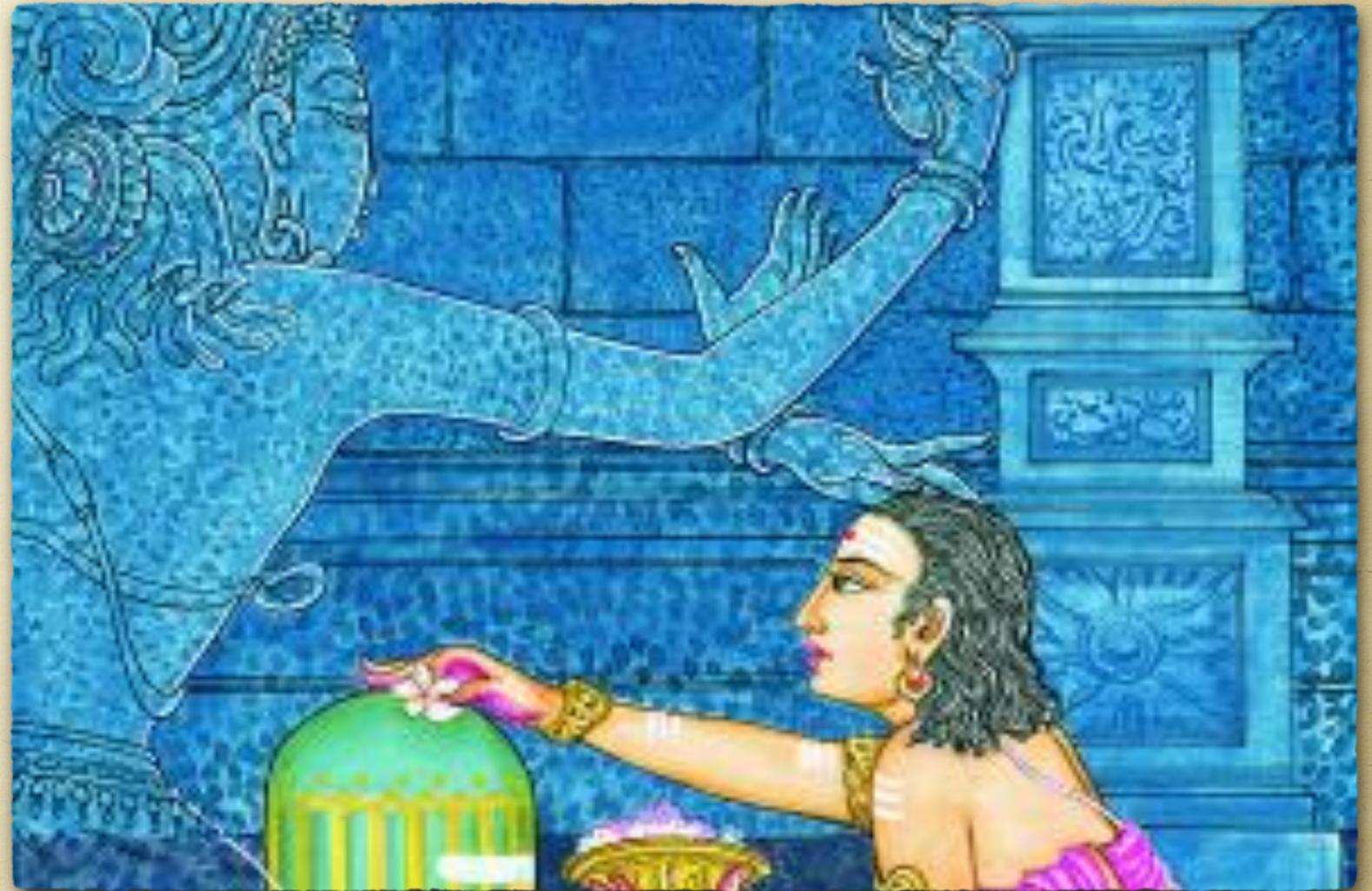


**The *Vedas* and the many
Agamas.**

What is 'shruti'?

These large collections of religious books are called *shruti*, "that which is heard."

This means they were revealed by God to Indian rishis long, long ago.



The Vedas more than 6,000 years ago ...

For the *Vedas* this possibly occurred more than 6,000 years ago.

For many centuries they were chanted from memory, then finally written down in the Sanskrit language.

The Rig, Sama, Yajur and Atharva are the four Vedas.

Each has a section on hymns, rites, interpretation and philosophy.



Vedic Mantras chanted during Temple Worship

Many of the mantras chanted during temple worship are from the *Vedas*.

The *Upanishads* are the most popular and mystical part of the *Vedas*.



The *Agamas* date back about 2,000 years

The *Agamas* date back about 2,000 years and are also in Sanskrit.

Each major Hindu lineage has its own *Agamas*.

There are 28 main Saiva Siddhanta *Agamas*, each with four sections.

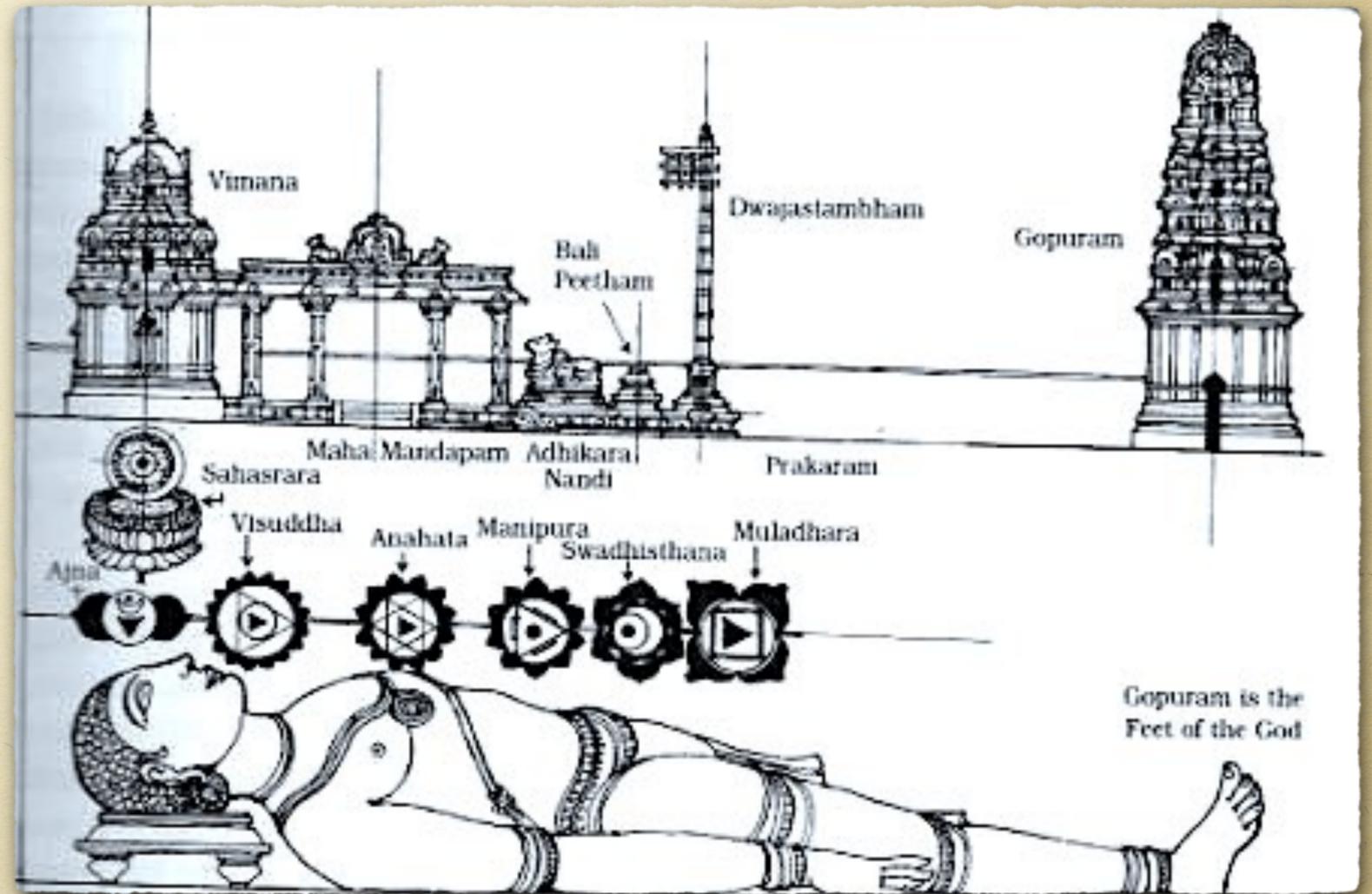


Saiva Siddhanta Agamas

The *Agamas* provide knowledge in temple design and construction, daily worship and festivals.

They also provide teaching on meditation and Saiva philosophy.

The *Vedas* have been published in many languages, but the *Agamas* are not yet widely known..

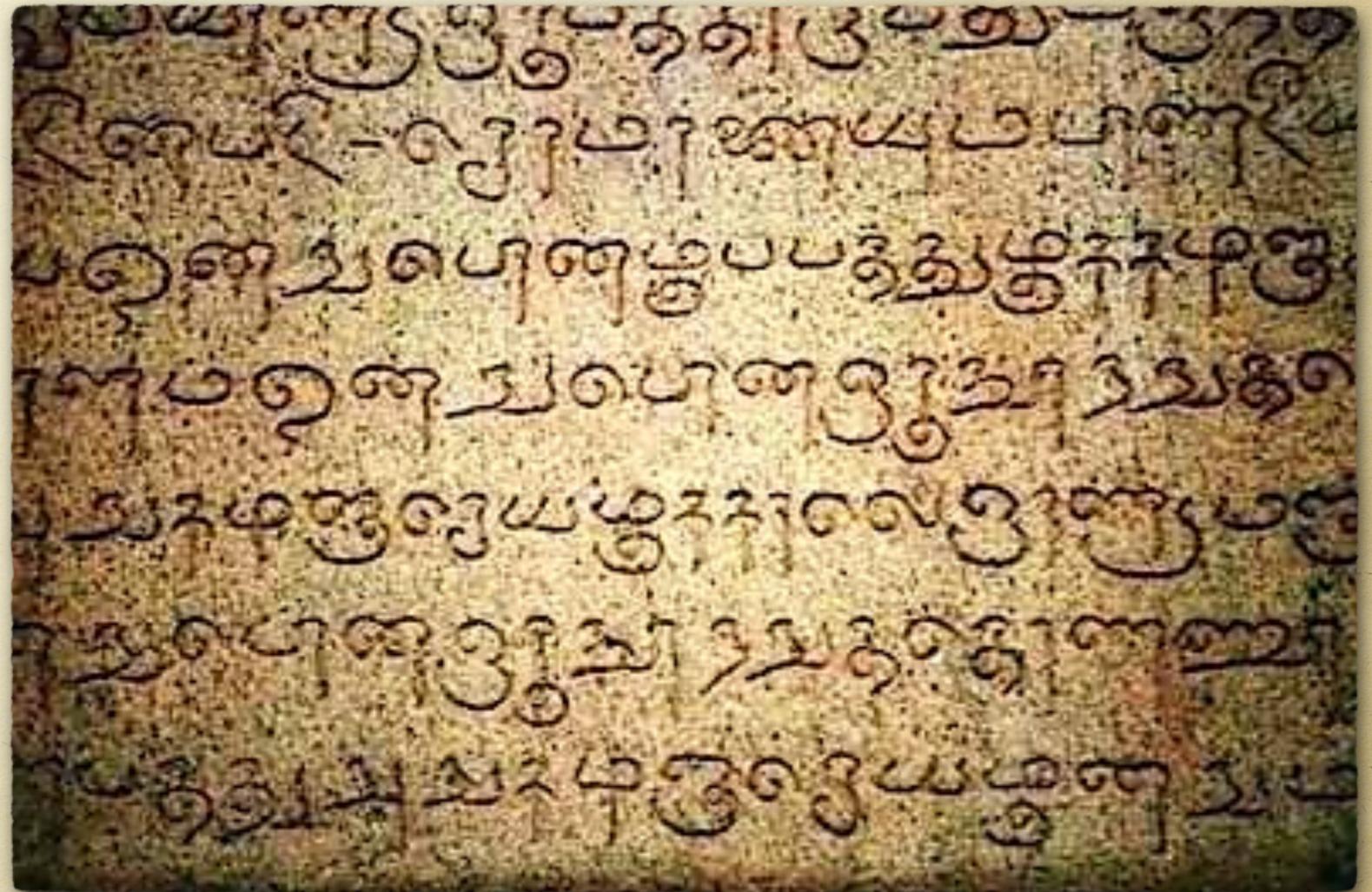


Secondary scriptures called '*smriti*'

In addition to the Vedas and Agamas, Saiva Siddhanta has thousands of sacred books and songs.

These comprise a vast body of secondary scriptures called *smriti*, many of which are written in the Tamil language.

A popular *smriti* text is the *Tirumurai*, a twelve-book collection of hymns composed by numerous Saivite saints.



The *Tirumantiram* by Tirumular

Most important among these is the *Tirumantiram*, a yogic treatise by Rishi Tirumular, recording the Saiva tenets in 3,047 verses.

The *Tirumantiram* is prized for expressing a unified understanding of Siddhanta and Vedanta.



The Tirukkural

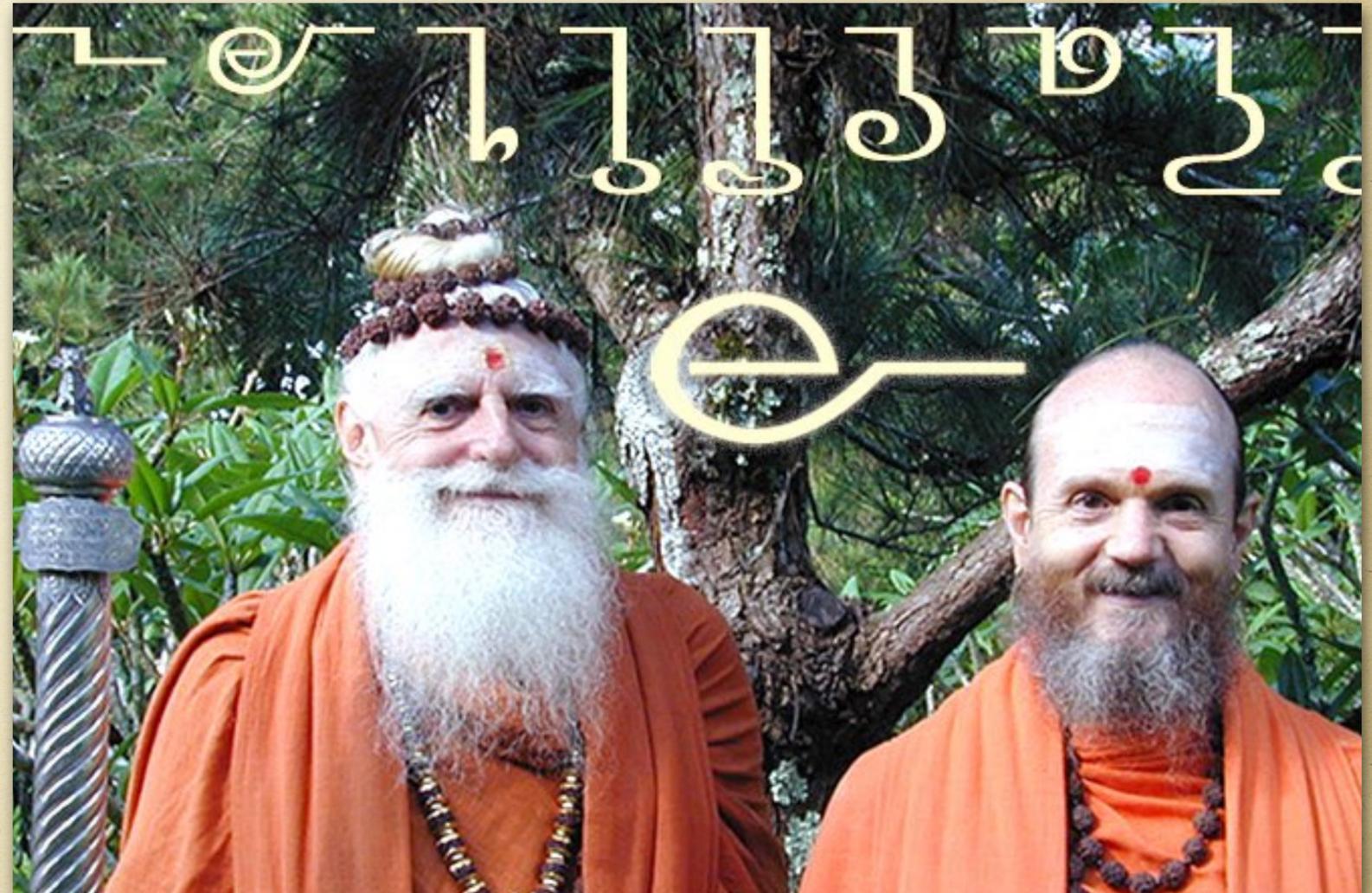
Another important smriti text is the *Tirukural*, containing 1,330 couplets by the weaver saint Tiruvalluvar.

The *Tirukural*, one of the world's greatest ethical scriptures, is sworn on in South Indian courts of law.



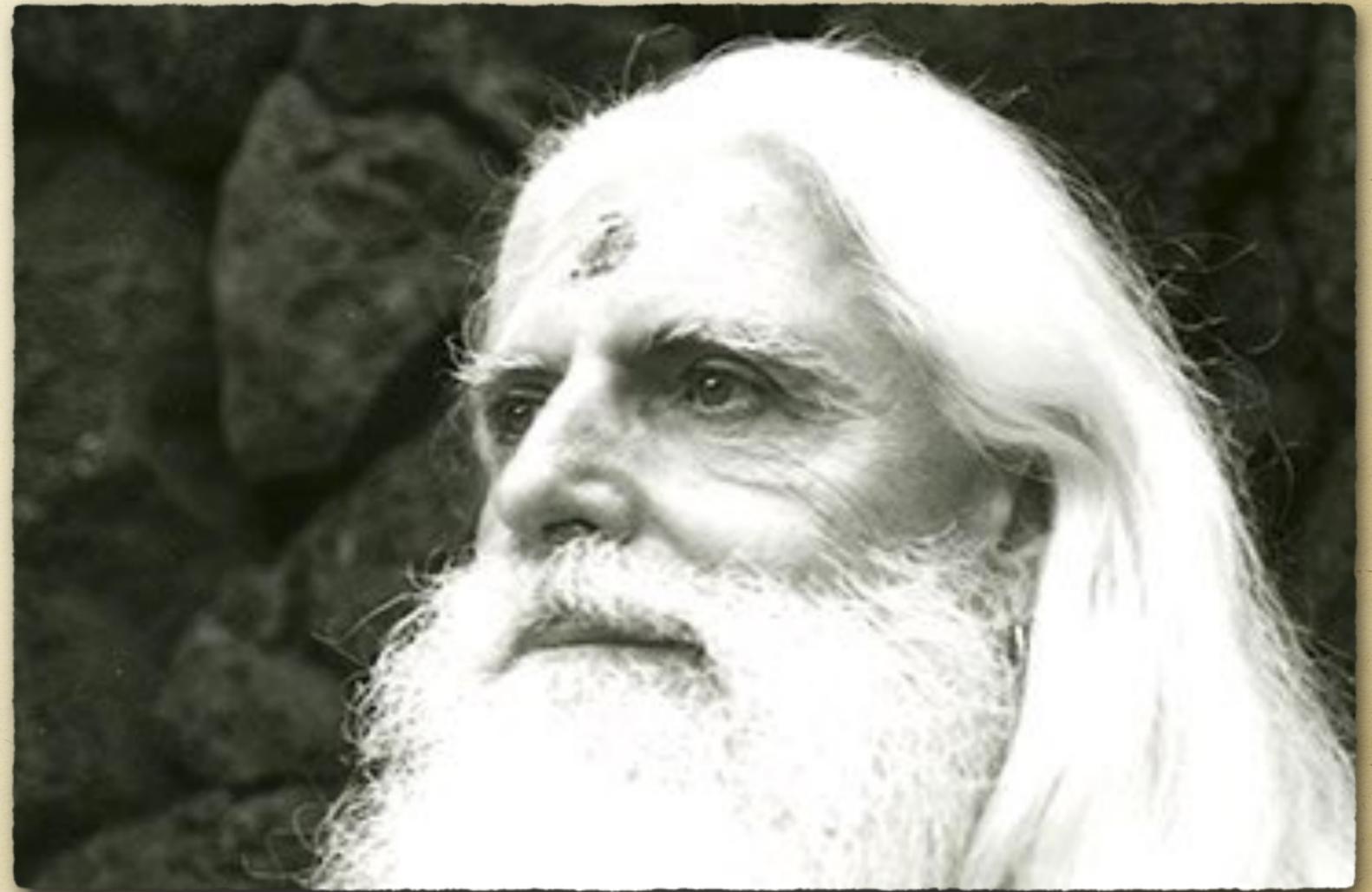
Writings of the Satguru

We also regard the writings of our
satgurus as scripture.



Gurudeva says...

If you desire to find the answer to any question intently enough, you can find the answer within yourself, or you can find it in our holy scriptures or books of wisdom.



QUESTIONS for Lesson 20

20.1 The Vedas:

(Check the incorrect answer)

- A. Are called shruti, "that which is read"
- B. Were revealed more than 6,000 years ago
- C. Were originally chanted from memory

20.2 The Rig, Sama, Yajur and Atharva are the four Agamas.

- True
- False

20.3 The Upanishads are the

(Check the correct answer)

- A. Manual for constructing temples
- B. Most popular and mystical part of the Vedas
- C. Guide for how to conduct festivals

20.4 The Agamas:

(Check the incorrect answer)

- A. Are not part of shruti
- B. Date back about 2,000 years
- C. Have a section on daily worship

20.5 The Thirumurai

(Check the incorrect answer)

- A. Are a twenty-book collection of hymns
- B. Contain the Tirumantiram by Rishi Tirumular
- C. Are part of our secondary scripture called smriti