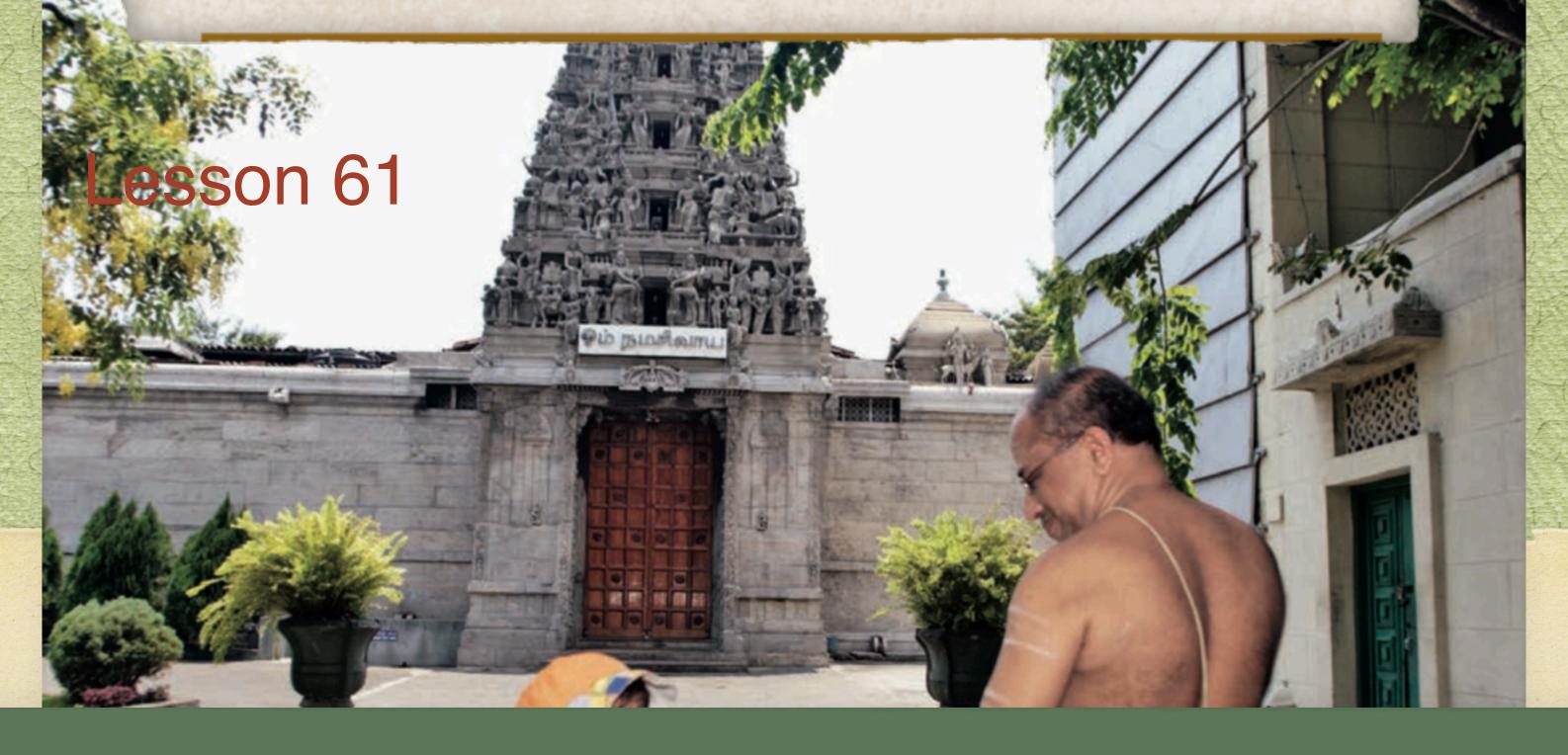
Path to Siva

A Catechism for Youth

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How Do We Visit the Temple?

Visiting a Temple



We go to the temple to be close to God.

Though Siva is everywhere, it is in the holy temple that we can most easily feel His presence.

Prior to our Temple visit...

Knowing that Siva and the devas can see us, we want to look our best.

Before our visit, we bathe and put on clean, traditional clothing.

We bring an offering, such as fruits, milk and incense or a lovely garland of flowers.



Upon arrival at the temple

The act of giving makes us receptive to blessings.

Outside, we remove our shoes and wash our hands, feet and mouth and seek blessings at Lord Ganesha's shrine.



Walking clockwise around...

Next we walk clockwise around the temple or the central chamber, then pay respects to each Deity.



Temple ceremony

If it is puja time, we sit quietly and enjoy the ceremony being performed by the priest.

Through his chants, gestures, visualizations and offerings, he purifies himself and honors the Deity with choice offerings, as one would receive a king.



We focus on the act of worship

He calls upon God to come and shower blessings on all.

During the puja we focus on the acts of worship, not allowing our mind to wander.

Over time, we learn the meaning of the priest's chants and rituals and mentally follow along.



After the arati...

After the arati we prostrate and rise to receive the flame, blessed water, holy ash and other sacraments, receiving each item with the right hand.



Sit and meditate

Then we sit quietly and meditate, or just feel the blessings wash over us.

This is also a good time for japa.



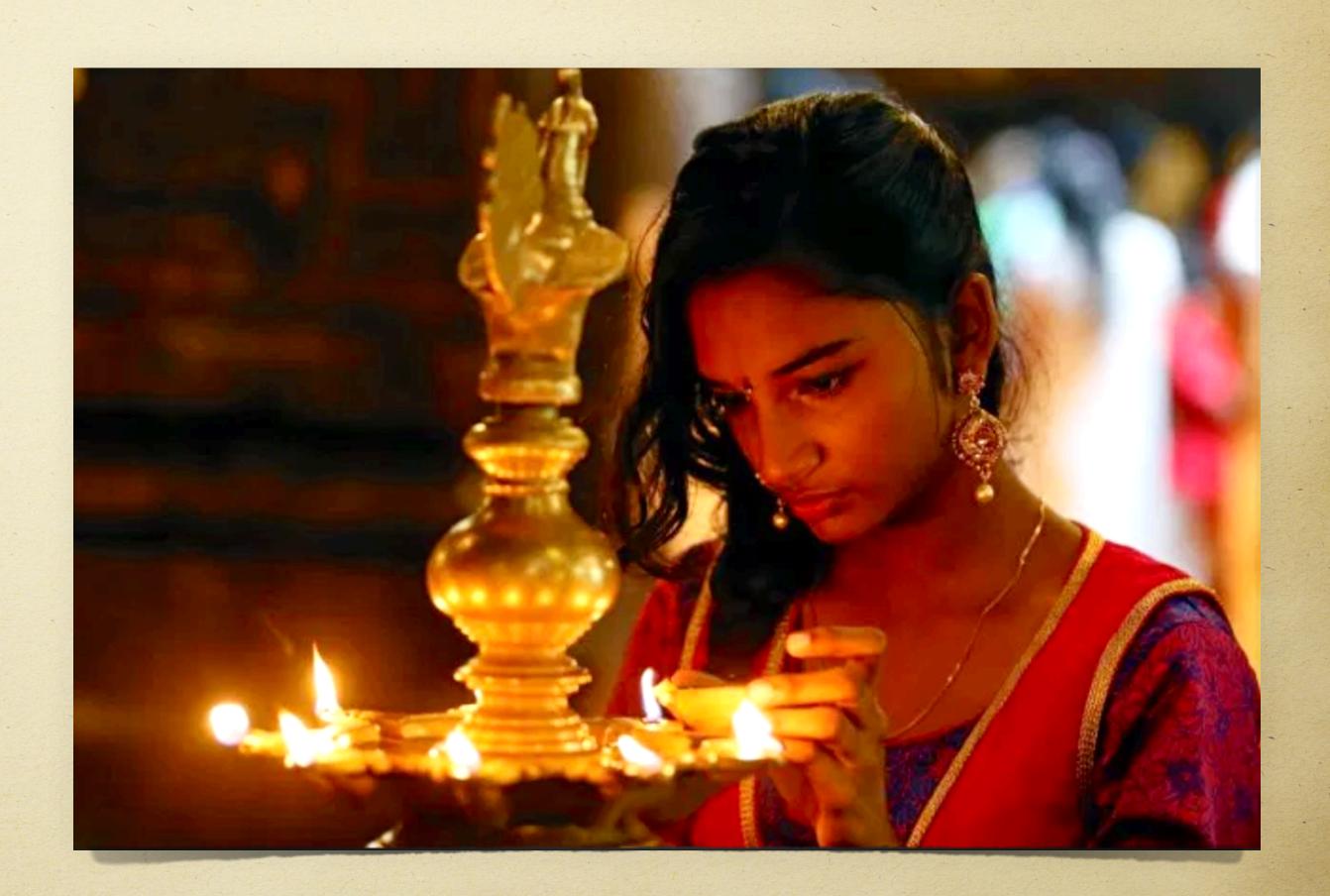
Worship can take many forms

Worship takes many forms in a temple. Devotees can be immersed in the joys of devotion, lost in prayerful communion, seeking consolation for a loss, singing devotional songs, chanting mantras or celebrating a rite of passage.



On arriving home

Arriving home, we light a lamp in our shrine room to bring the devas from the temple into that sacred space.



We get the chance to look inward

Pujas and rituals give us a chance to pause, look inward and concentrate on something more meaningful and profound than the mundane matters of life.



We focus on the act of worship

Puja is holy communion, full of wonder and tender affections.

The indispensable part of any puja is devotion.

Without love in the heart, outer performance is of limited value.

But with true devotion, even simple gestures are sacred ritual.



Gurudeva says...

In our religion there are altars in temples all over the world inhabited by the devas and the great Gods.

When you enter these holy places, you can sense their sanctity.



61.1 Siva is everywhere. We can feel His presence as easily at home as we can in the temple.	
□ True	
□ False	
61.2 Number the tollowings actions from 1 - 6 in the	
order they are performed when visiting a temple.	
Pay respects to each Deity	
Bring an offering such as fruits, milk and incense or	
a lovely garland of flowers	
Walk clockwise around the temple or the central chamber	
Remove our shoes and wash our hands, feet and	
mouth	
Bathe and put on clean, traditional clothingSeek blessings at Lord Ganesha's shrine	
deck blessings at Lord danesna's simile	
61.3 During the puja it is fine to just let our mind	
wander.	
□ True □ False	

QUESTIONS for Lesson 61



61.4 Arriving home, we place a flower from the temple in our shrine room to bring the devas from the temple into that sacred space.

- □ True
- □ False

61.5 The indispensable part of any puja for the devotee attending is

(Check the correct answer)

- ☐ A. Devotion
- ☐ B. Bringing lots of flowers to the temple
- ☐ C. Knowing the meaning of the chants

Path to Siva

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Lesson 62

How Can We Strengthen Our Temple?

Home of God and the Gods



Blessed with the knowledge that the temple is the home of God and the Gods, we visit often, for they are our dear friends.

Visiting the Temple

This is the first way to strengthen and become a valued part of our temple and its community, by keeping your spiritual life strong.

The more we visit, the more sensitive we become to the spiritual energies.



What happens when our bhakti grow?

As our love, or bhakti, grows, the grace of the Gods makes us kinder, more cooperative and more generous with our time.



Participating and helping...

The second way to strengthen and serve the temple is by participating in activities and helping with duties to make it beautiful and inviting.

This uplifts our energies and keeps us close to other devotees.



How to serve in a temple?

Service takes many forms.

We can prepare decorations a nd assist the priest with puja items.

We may like to help cook and serve prasadam to devotees.



Other ways to help...

We can welcome temple visitors, organize activities, make garlands, clean lamps or direct parking.

We can sing or dance during satsanga and festivals.

We can help with mailings or contribute to the temple website.



During festivals...

Festival times each year offer even more ways to help.

By attending the temple on such auspicious days, when the shakti is strongest, we become attuned to the Deity's blessings.



Centre of Hindu spiritual life

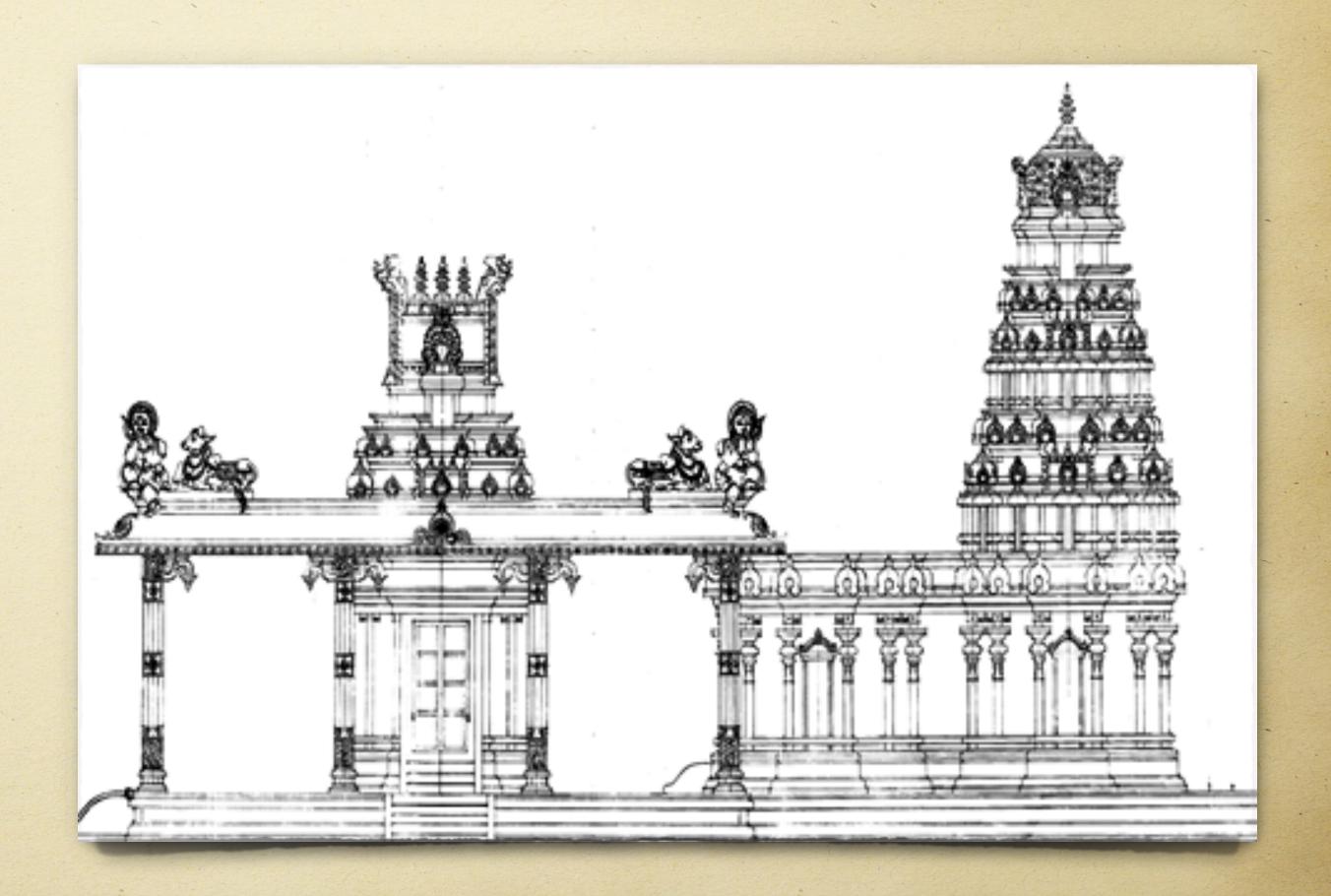
The temple is the center of Hindu spiritual life.

Saivites consider it most important to live no farther than a day's journey from a holy temple, and we build one wherever we find ourselves in the world.



Helping in temple building

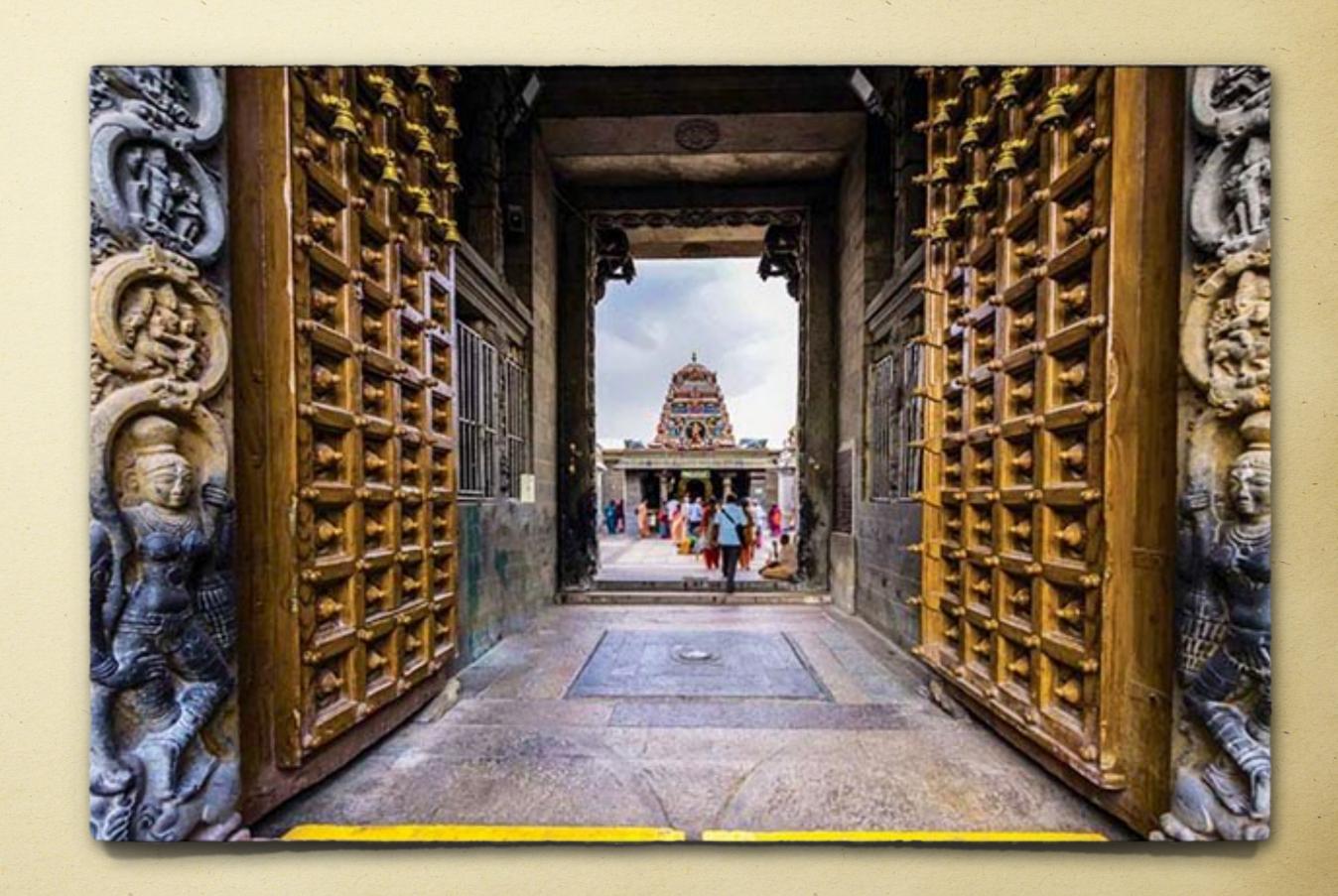
Helping to build a temple earns blessings in this life and the next; plus it is a gift to future generations.



Temple worship is for everyone...

Temple worship is for all men and women at every level of spiritual development.

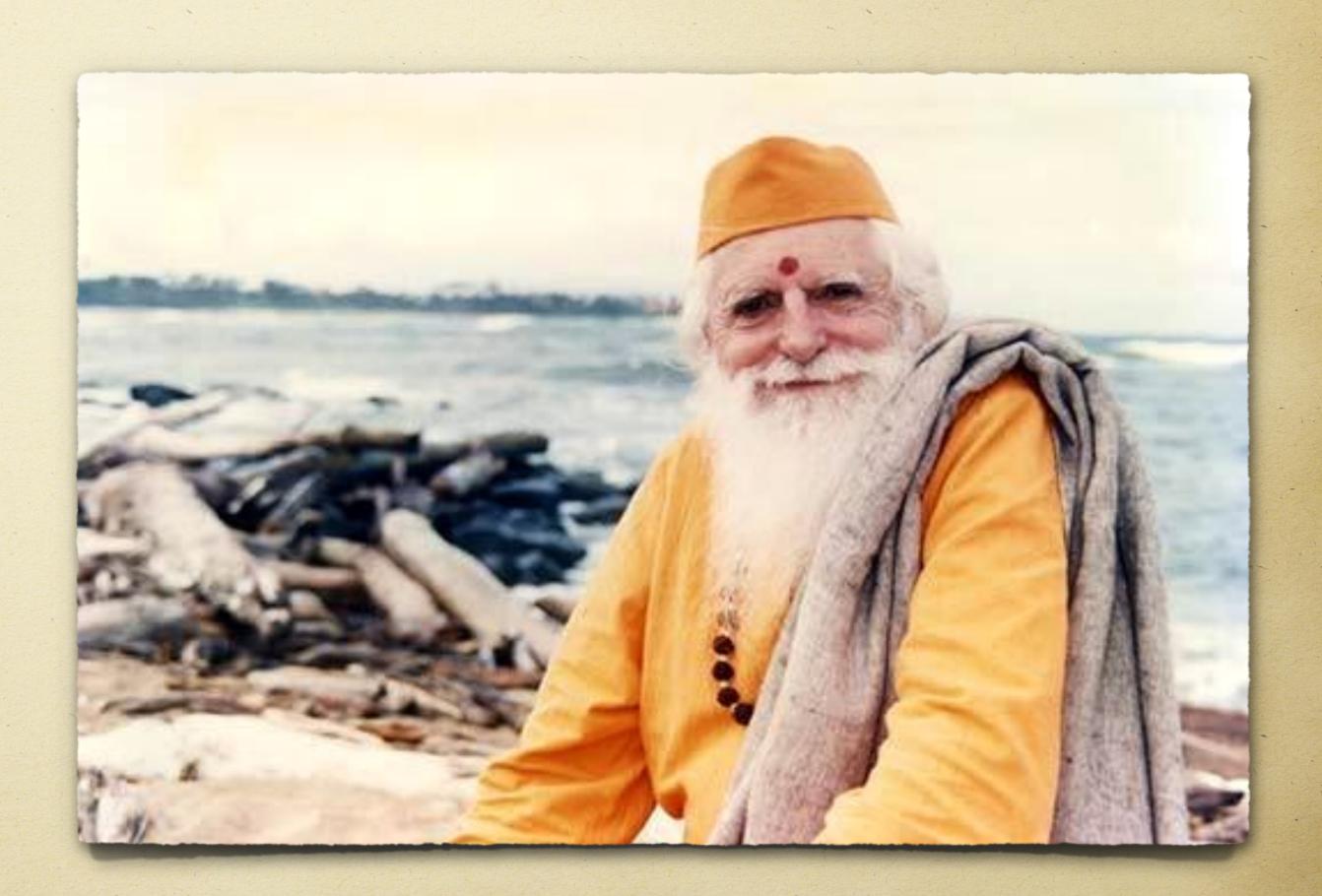
Its meaning and experience deepen as we unfold spiritually through the stages of service, devotion, yoga and enlightened wisdom. We never outgrow the practice of temple worship.



Gurudeva says...

In Hinduism it is believed that the Gods are living, thinking, dynamic beings who live in a different world, in an inner world in the microcosm within this world in which there exists a greater macrocosm than this visible macrocosm. ...

Through temple worship, the three worlds become open to one another, and the beings within them are able to communicate.



Enter the letter from below of A - B for the phrase that correctly completes the idea. The first way we can strengthen our temple The second way we can strengthen our temple (A) Is to visit often (B) Is to participate in activities and helping with duties to make it beautiful and inviting **62.2** The Deity's shakti is strongest on (Check the correct answer) ☐ A. Fridays ☐ B. New moon days ☐ C. Festival days Saivites consider it most important to live no farther from a holy temple than (Check the correct answer) ☐ A. Two day's journey ☐ B. A day's journey □ C. One mile

QUESTIONS for Lesson 62/7/



62.4 Helping to build a temple

(Check the incorrect answer)

- ☐ A. Earns no blessings
- ☐ B. Earns blessings in the next life
- ☐ C. Earns blessings in this life

When we reach the age seventy-two we no longer need to go to the temple as we have outgrown the practice of temple worship.

- □ True
- □ False

Path to Siva

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What Is Our Form of Prayer?

Closer than our breath...

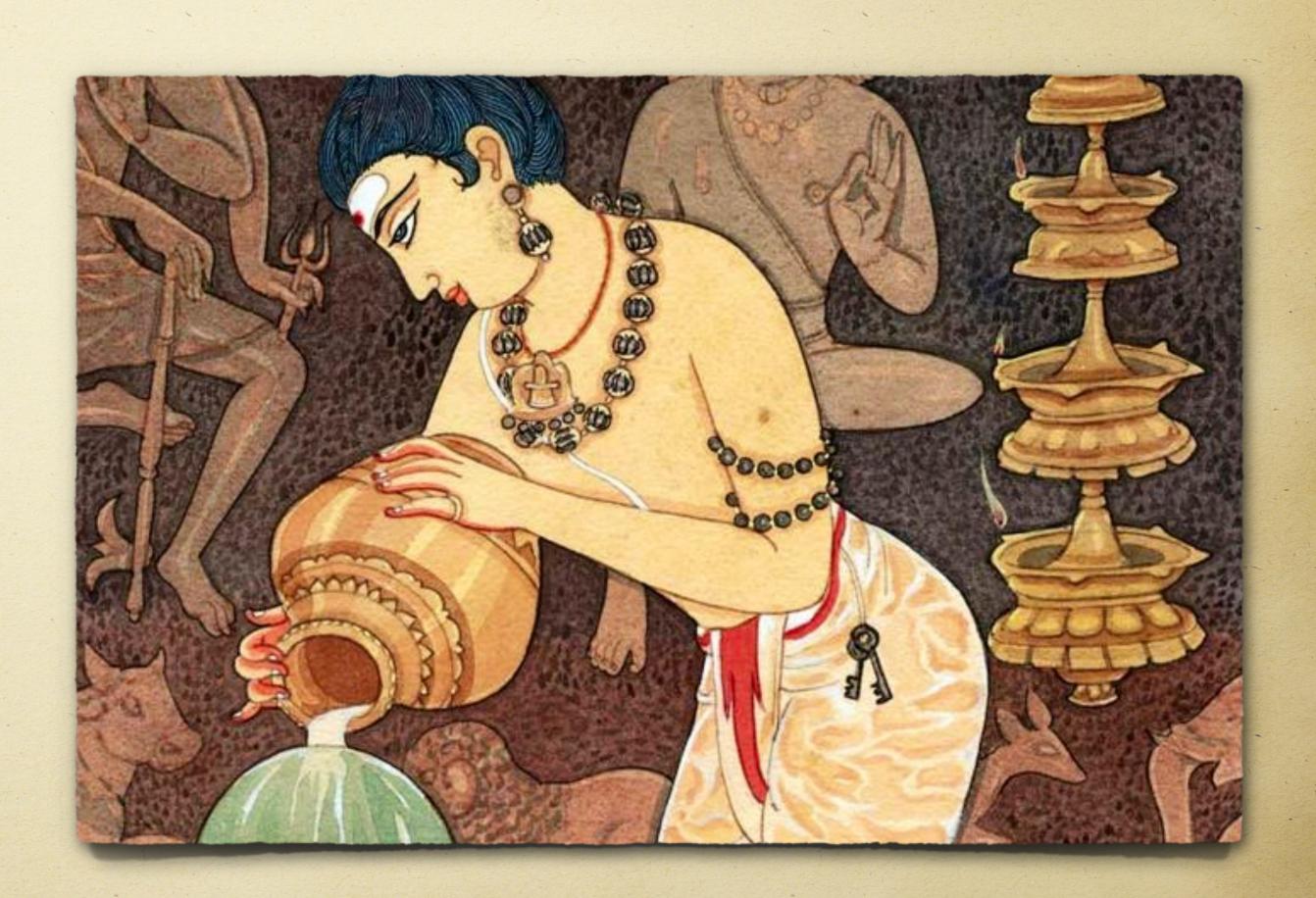


God Siva and the Gods are always with us, closer than breathing, nearer than hands and feet.

Praying is our way of communicating with them.

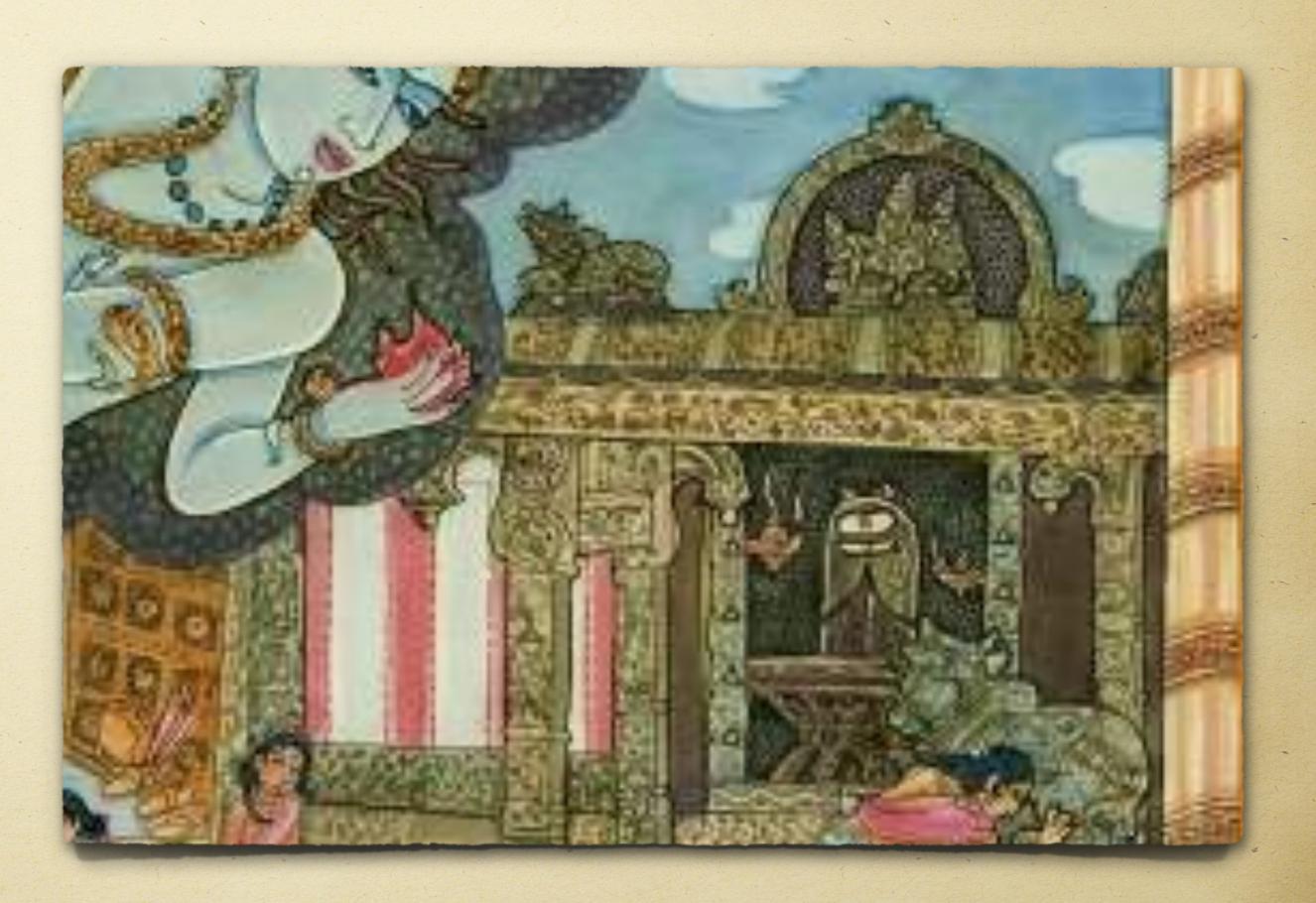
How to offer a prayer...

To offer a prayer, visualize the face of God Siva or a God, concentrate and say your prayer mentally, sending it up through the top of your head.



You can pray anywhere but...

You can pray anywhere, but the innerworld beings can best hear you in a sacred temple or your home shrine.



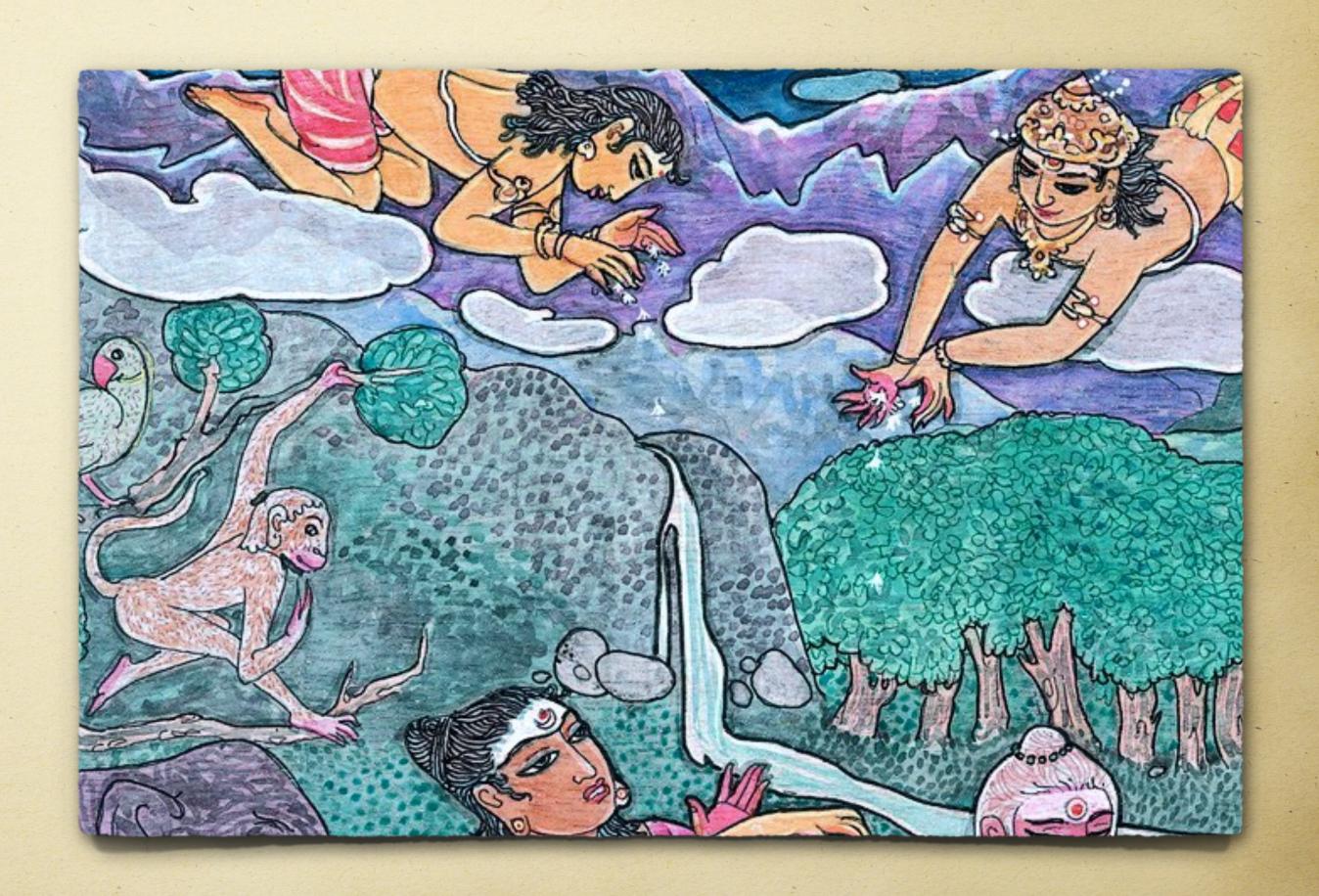
How do the Gods respond?

One of the greatest prayers of all is giving thanks for all the gifts Siva has provided in our life.

Most often, though, devotees pray for help.

The Gods will respond. Most simply, they send a blessing to quiet your mind and clear your aura.

Sometimes this is all that's needed.

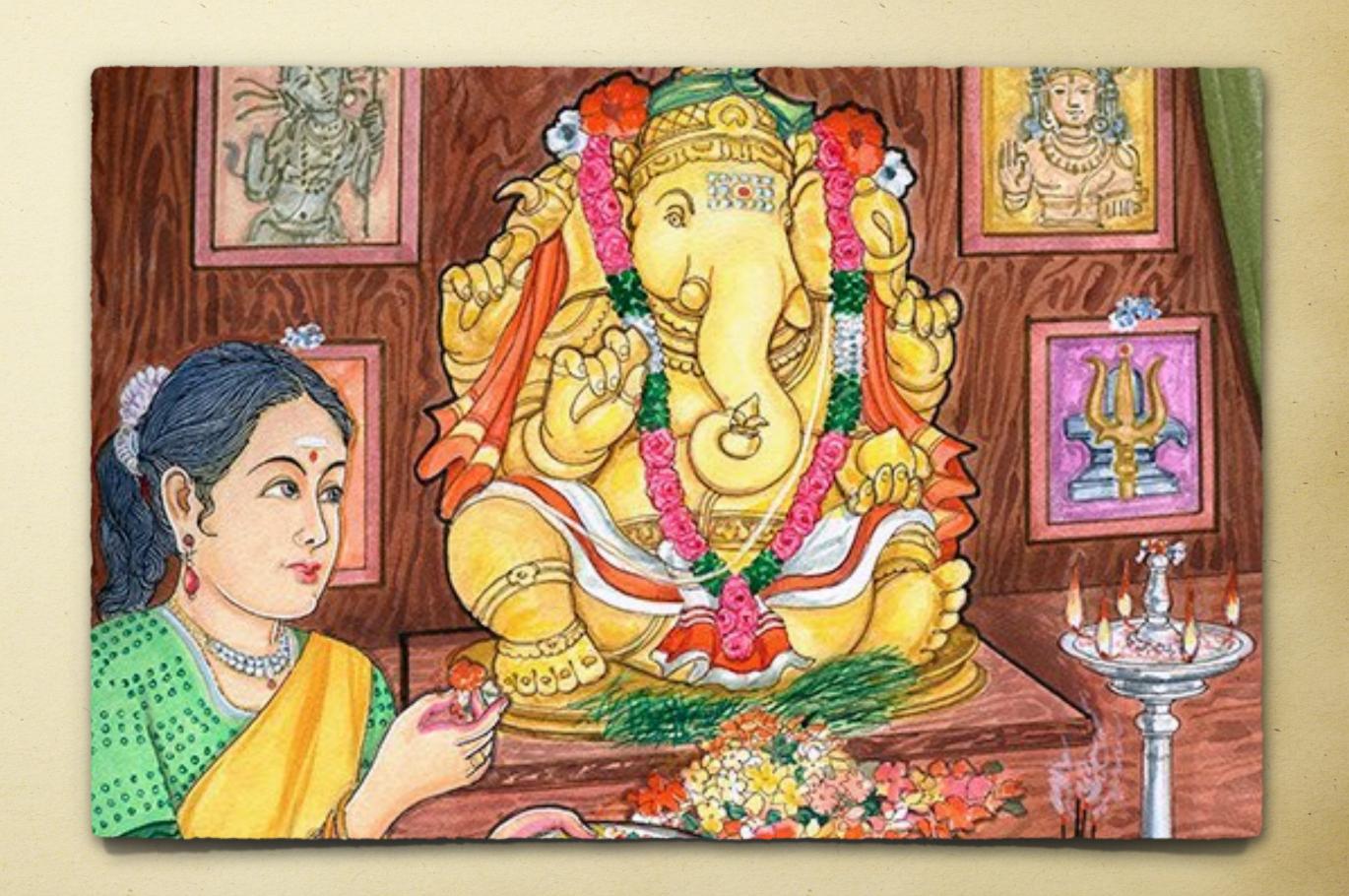


Praying to Lord Ganesha...

Suppose you pray to Lord Ganesha for help with your studies.

After the blessing from the Mahadeva, the subject matter seems clear and interesting.

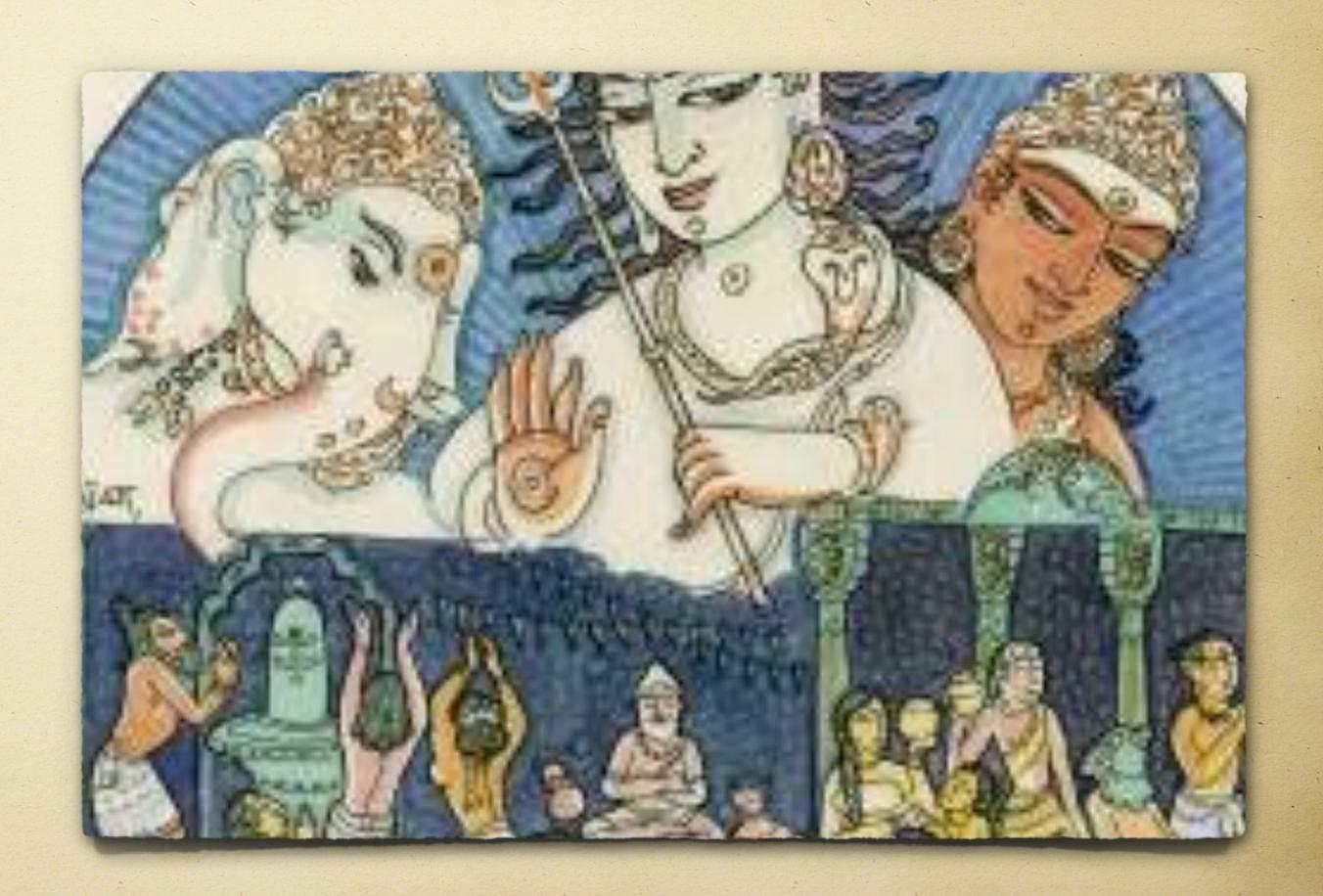
You absorb it easily and do better on your tests.



A deva may be assigned to help you.

Answering some prayers may require assigning a deva to determine the best way to assist you.

It is comforting to know that the Gods, their devas and your own guardian devas are ever ready to respond to your requests for help and guidance.



How do you get this boon?

You gain this boon by living a religious life and being consistent in your sadhana.



Burning written prayers...

Some temples, such as Kadavul Temple in Hawaii, accept written prayers from devotees.

When burned, these are released to their astral form in the Devaloka for the devas to read and act upon.



God and the Gods know better...

Before asking for help, we make every effort to use our own intelligence and strength.

In our prayers we always remember that God and the Gods know the highest course for our life.

They know better than we do the lessons and experiences we need to improve.



Our prayers are always answered.

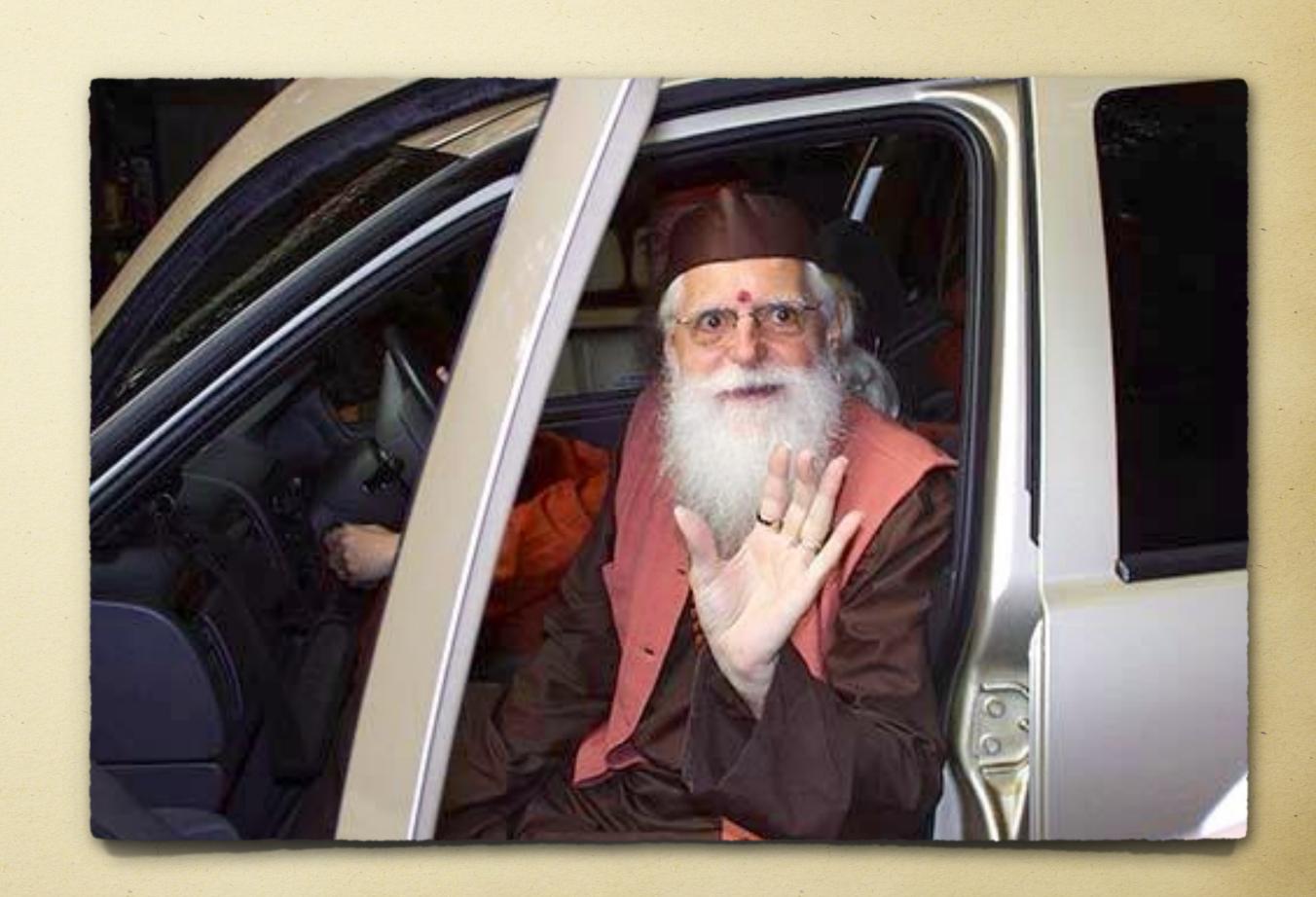
Our prayers will be answered, and in wisdom we accept the answer—even if it is not what we had hoped for.



Gurudeva says...

Those who worship in Siva temples slowly gain acceptance into the devonic realms of the Gods, and one or two of the uncountable numbers of devonic intelligences often return with the devotee to his home. ...

It is these guardian devas who are the first to receive the devotee's written prayers when they are transferred to the Devaloka through the sacred fire.



up through the top of our head. □ True □ False	
63.2 Inner-world beings can hear your prayer equally as well wherever you are.	
63.3 When we pray for help, the Gods respond most simply by sending a blessing to quiet your mind and clear your aura.	
□ True □ False	

To offer a prayer, we visualize the face of God Siva or

a God, concentrate and say our prayer mentally, sending it

QUESTIONS for Lesson 63 //



63.4 Before asking for help, we

(Check the correct answer)

- ☐ A. Make no effort to use our own intelligence and strength
- ☐ B. Make every effort to use our own intelligence and strength

63.5 Our prayers will be answered exactly in the way we hoped for.

- □ True
- □ False

Path to Siva

A Catechism for Youth

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Lesson 64

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How Do We Celebrate Festivals?

Hindu festivals



Hinduism is celebratory by nature. Hindus miss no opportunity to set mundane matters aside and join with family, friends, neighbors and strangers alike to feast and have fun, to renew the home and the heart and, most importantly, draw nearer to God.

Festivals are times of profound mysticism

Festivals are perhaps more impressive and varied in Hinduism than in any other religion.

The devout Hindu knows these are times of profound mysticism, when God and the Gods touch our world, revitalize our souls, lighten karmas and bless our families.



Festivals perpetuate religion

Yet, festivals do even more than this.

They are essential to the perpetuation of religion, periodically reigniting the spark of zeal and devotion in the community.



Sharing spiritual values...

They provide the spiritual public square where Hindus engage with one another to affirm shared values and enjoy life's intersections.



Preparations before the festivals...

Before each celebration, vows are taken, scriptures are studied, pilgrimages are made and fasts observed in preparation.

Such acts of intimate devotion bring the devotee closer to the Gods and keep him on the path to his inmost Self.



Collective worship

As each festival begins, solitary worship becomes a collective ritual, with millions of people taking their places in a creative choreography.



Festivals are special and unforgettable

Every festival is special and unforgettable in its own way.

Thus Hindus are reminded of their faith by the sounds, scents, colorful decorations and the wild medley of tastes laid out for the feast.



Positive effects on the mind and emotions

Mind and emotions are saturated with Hinduism as sacred mantra prayers are intoned, the spiritual teachings are recounted by saints, and the Gods are praised in melodious bhajans.



Festivals in India

Each Indian village and each global community lends a little of its unique culture to how a festival is celebrated, creating almost endless variations.



Festivals outside India

Recently, with the growing Hindu population outside of India, festivals have acquired an international dimension.

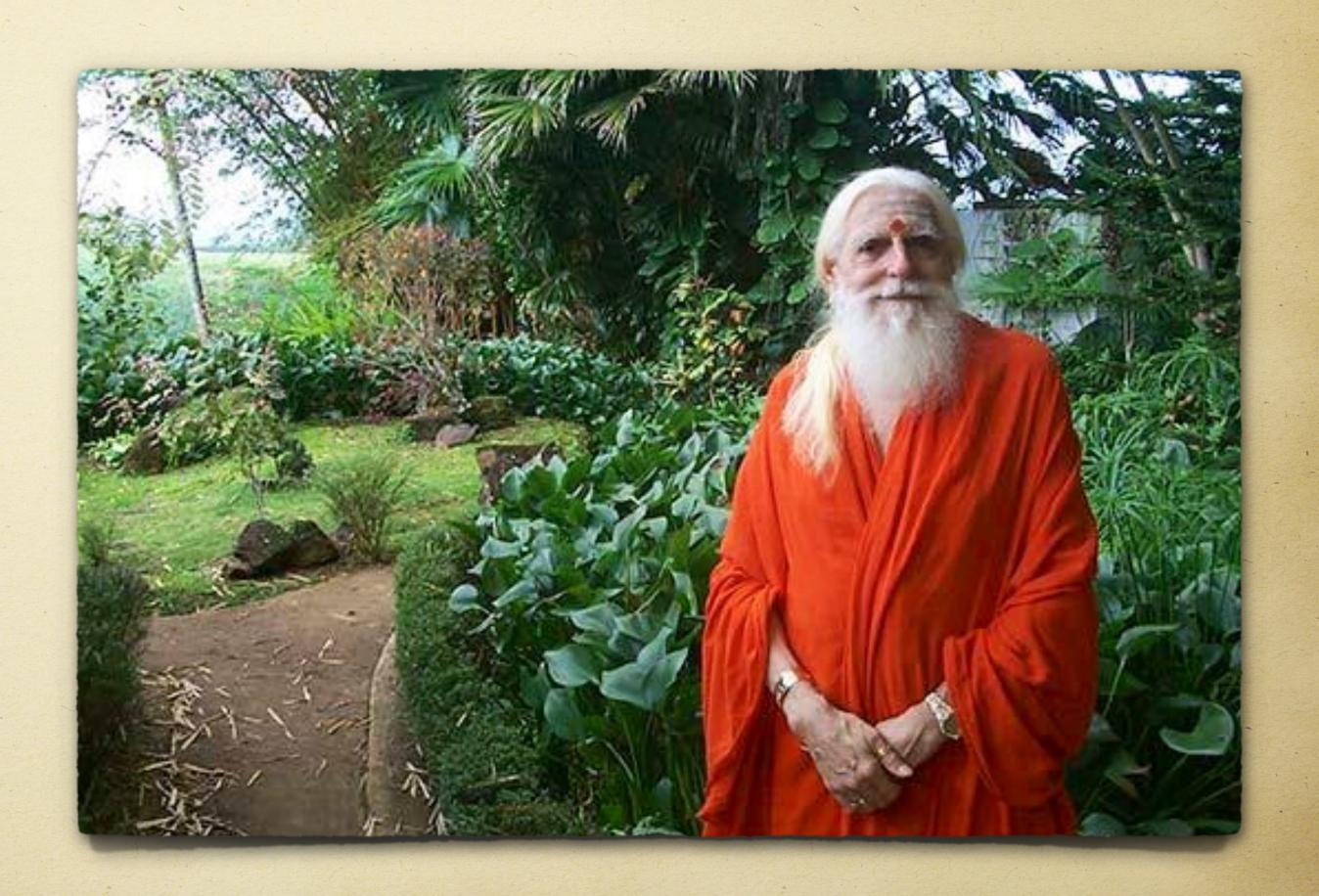
What could be more entertaining, alive, vibrant and yet pious and rich in symbolism than a Hindu festival?



Gurudeva says...

Festivals are special times of communion with God and Gods, of family and community sharing and sadhana....

We strive to attend each major festival, when the shakti of the Deity is most powerful, and pilgrimage to a far-off temple annually.



(Check the correct answer) ☐ A. To feast and have fun ☐ B. To renew the home and the heart ☐ C. Draw nearer to God **64.2** Enter the letter from below of A - D for the phrase that correctly completes the idea. The devout Hindu knows these are times of profound mysticism when God and the Gods Touch Revitalize Lighten Bless (A) Our world (B) Our families (C) Our souls (D) Karmas Before each celebration (Check the incorrect answer) ☐ A. Vows are taken ☐ B. Scriptures are studied □ C. Pilgrimages are made □ D. Feasting is observed

64.1 The most important aspect of Hindu festivals is

QUESTIONS for Lesson 64%



64.4 Hindu festivals are times when solitary worship

(Check the correct answer)

- ☐ A. Is observed throughout
- ☐ B. Becomes a collective ritual, with millions of people taking their places in a creative choreography

64.5 Enter the letter from below of A - C for the phrase that correctly completes the idea. During festivals, mind and emotions are saturated with Hinduism

- As sacred mantra prayers
- Spiritual teachings
- The Gods are praised
- (A) In melodious bhajans
- (B) Are intoned
- (C) Are recounted by saints

Path to Siva

A Catechism for Youth

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How Do We Observe Pilgrimage?

Our yearly pilgrimage



We prepare ourselves for our yearly pilgrimage inwardly and outwardly.

First we have to decide where to go, how to get there and how long to be away from home.

Choose a temple first...

We want to choose a temple that inspires us.

It could be the famed Mahakaleshwar Siva temple of Ujjain, or the Kashi Vishwanath temple in Varanasi, both in the middle of large cities.



It can be a remote temple

Or it could be a remote place, such as Rameshwaram, near the tip of South India, with its purifying wells.



Mount Kailash or Amartnath

Or it could be a holy site that is even harder to reach, such as Mount Kailas in Nepal or the Amarnath Cave in Kashmir.



It can be a holy place outside India...

We may also choose a holy place in Europe, the Americas, Malaysia or Australia.



Preparations for a good pilgrimage

Then we make sure that our affairs will be taken care of in our absence, allowing us to concentrate on the pilgrimage.

We prepare inwardly as well.

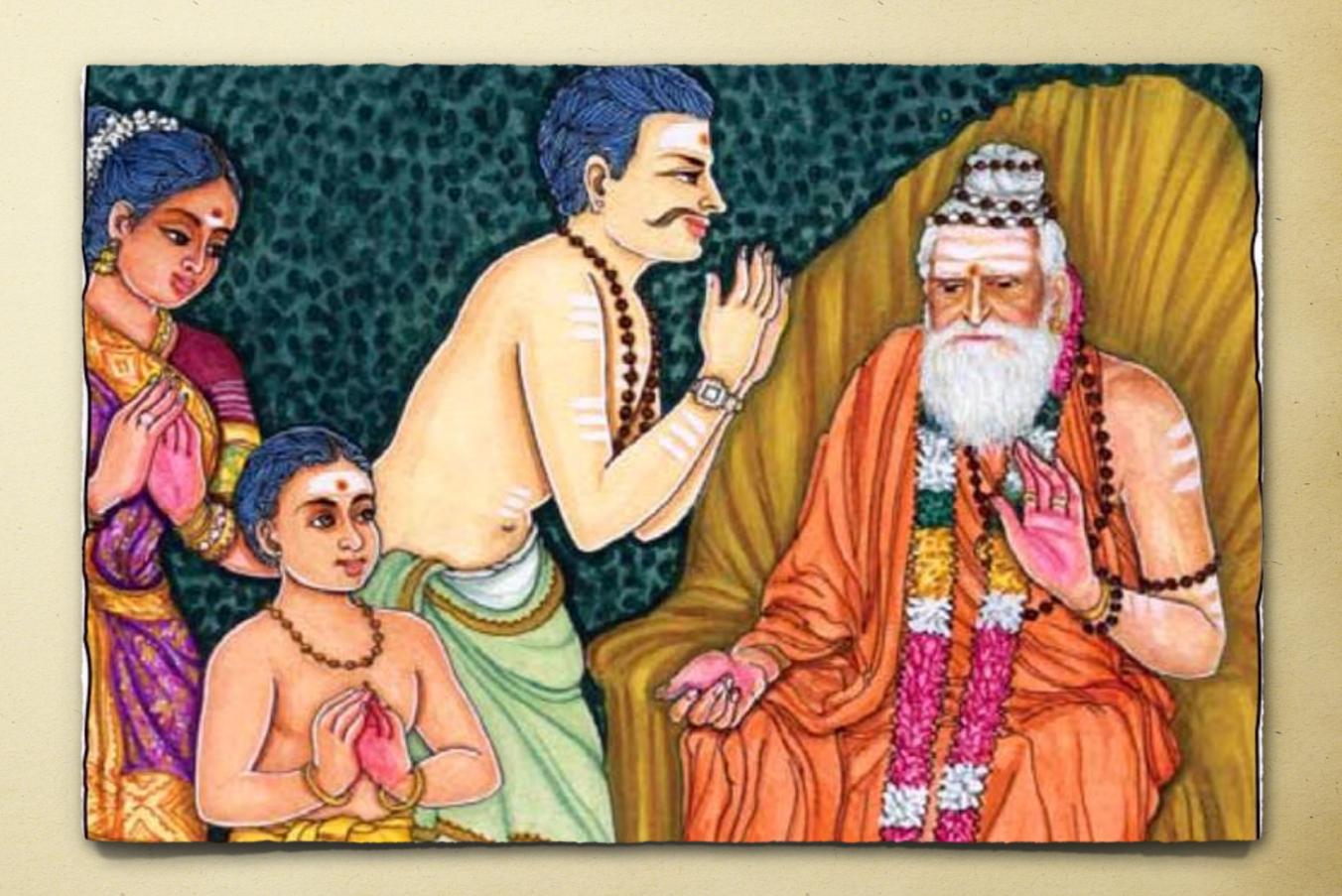
Before a pilgrimage, some devotees will fast, eating just one meal a day for a week or as long as a month..



Sadhanas and our Guru Blessings

Others do extra sadhanas and attend their local temple daily. All get the satguru's blessings for the journey.

Once we reach the destination, we throw ourself into the worship and attend every possible puja.



Leave everything at the Feet of the deity

We meditate deeply afterwards.

We put all our concern, worries, hopes and dreams at the feet of the Deity.

We go home inspired and fulfilled. This is true pilgrimage.



How do we look at a pilgrimage?

As Hindus, we don't necessarily feel the need to take a vacation to get away from it all.

We live a moderate, unhurried life and look at our pilgrimage as a special, cherished time to take problems and prayers to God.

We know that the blessings received will recharge our batteries and inspire us to do even better in our daily life.



An encounter with God...

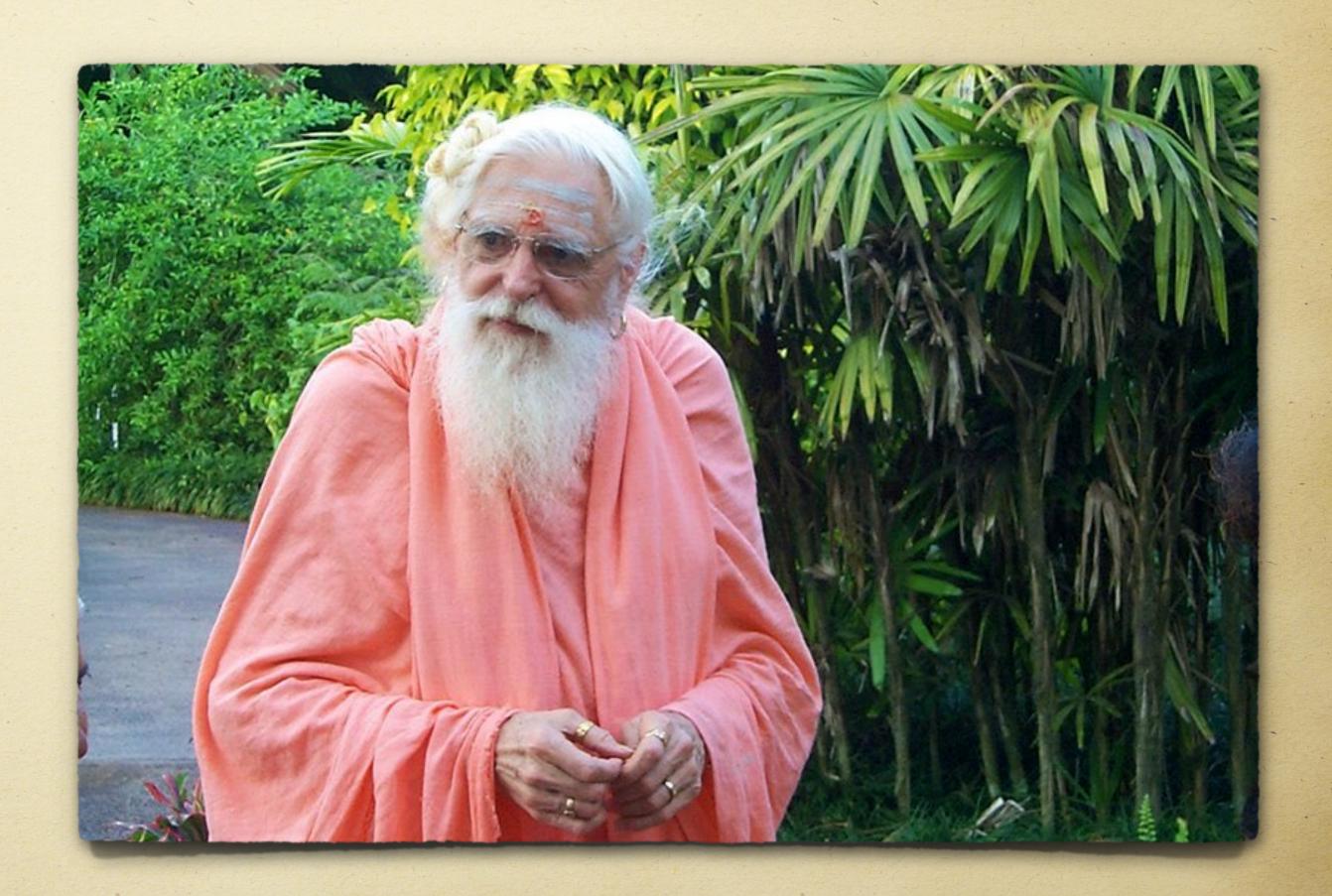
On pilgrimage we hope for special moments with the Deity, even an encounter with God at the holy destination.

These spiritual moments will grow within us for years to come.



Gurudeva says...

Different temples become famous for answering certain types of prayers, such as requests for financial help, or prayers for the right mate in marriage, prayers for healing, prayers to be entrusted with the raising of high-souled children, or help in matters of yoga, or help in inspiring bhakti and love.



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

QUESTIONS for Lesson 65⁴/2



6.2 To devout Hindus, all of life is spiritual; all o	f
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, noninjury and open-mindedness.
- □ True
- □ False

- Hindus as a religious community enjoy many protections and a respected unified voice.
- □ True
- □ False

Path to Siva

A Catechism for Youth

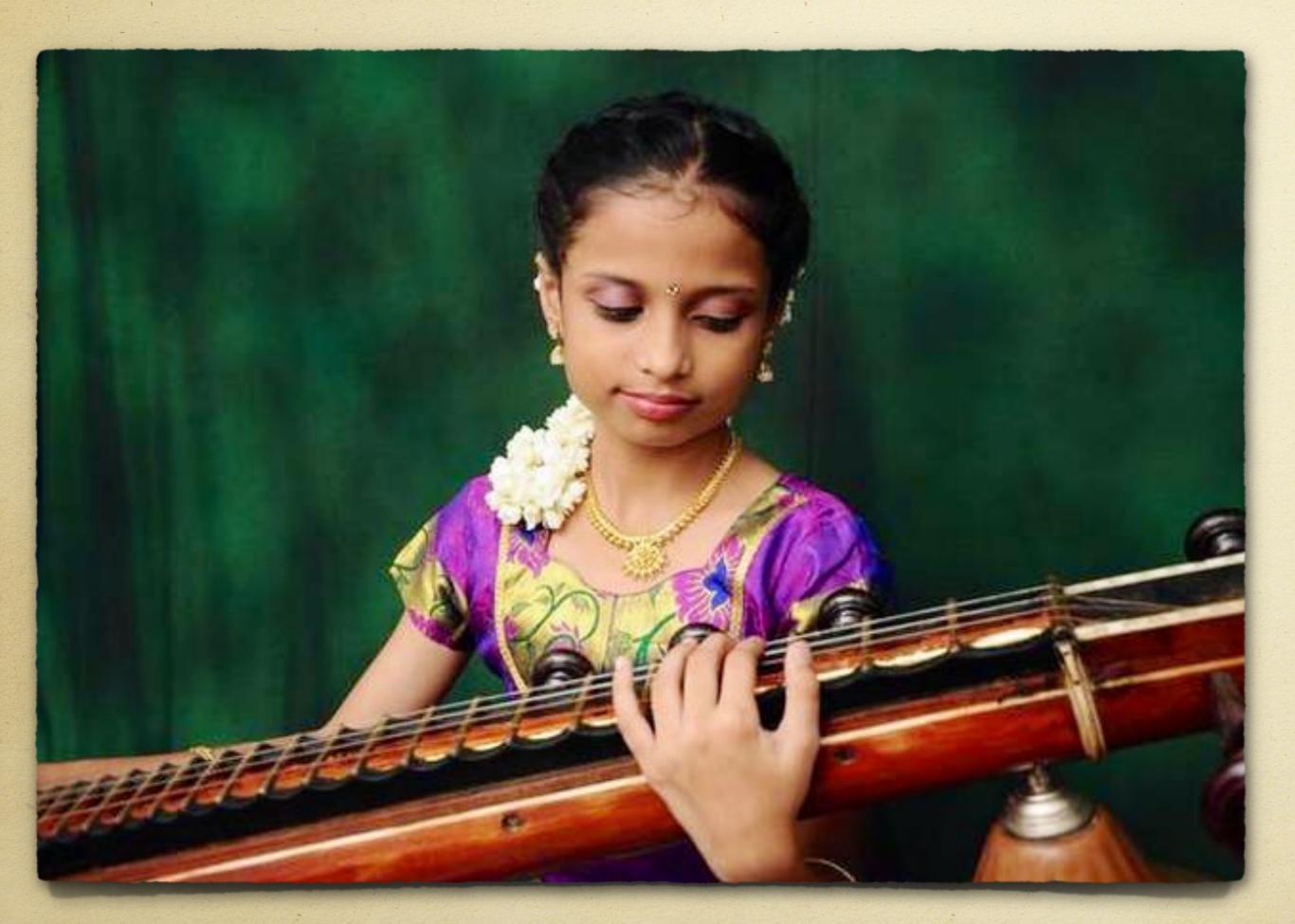
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Why Should We Learn a Cultural Art?

Enjoying culture



It is a great pleasure to listen to a fine singer or musician or watch a gifted dancer perform.

It is uplifting to see beautiful paintings by a devoted Saiva artist.

Listening to a story...

It is enchanting to hear someone tell a story well.

Each song, each art piece or performance is a gift to every devotee who experiences it.



Perfecting a saivite art

Gurudeva encouraged devotees to perfect a form of Saiva art, singing, drama, dance or a musical instrument.



Creative skill...with our hands...

The ideal time to start is in childhood.

He also praised the merits of learning a creative skill requiring the use of one's hands, such as pottery, sewing, weaving, painting, gardening, baking and the building arts.



Creative benefits ...

All these talents manifest creative benefits for family and community.

There are so many options for each of us.



What can we learn?

You could learn a form of classical Indian dance.

You could learn music, such as voice, vina, flute or drum.

You may learn Sanskrit chanting or dramatic storytelling.



You can become an expert...

You could become an expert at weaving flower garlands, writing poems, sculpting or carpentry.

You can create kolam floor designs and other handmade decorations.



The art of cooking

You can perfect the art of cooking and prepare delicious prasadam dishes for festivals.

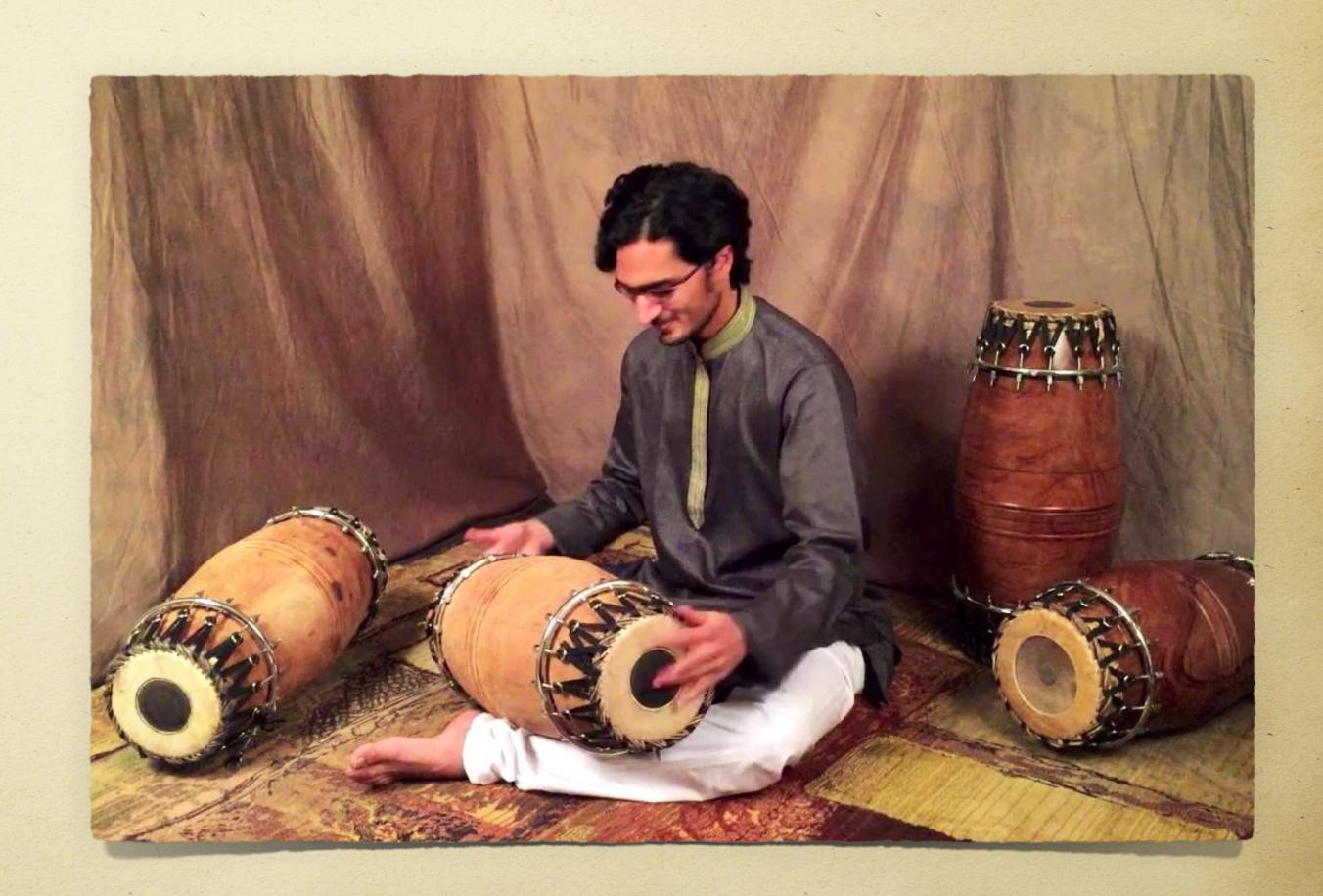


It takes hard work ... willpower...

Learning an art or skill takes hard work, willpower and dedication.

These are strengths you can apply to everything you do.

Each skill or art gives you new ways of uplifting your friends, family and community.



Become an accomplished human being

These cultural and creative expressions are fulfilling to you as well.

You become an accomplished human being.

And if you learn something well, you can teach that skill to others.



64 Kalas or cultural arts

There are 64 cultural arts, or kalas, in Hindu tradition.

In *Saiva Dharma Shastras* Gurudeva offered two contemporary lists, one for girls and one for boys.



Gurudeva says...

The Hindu enjoys all the facets of life as transmuted into a religious expression in art.

The Hindu's art is a religious art: drawing, painting and sculpture of the Gods, the devas, and the saints of our religion.

The music is devotional and depicts the tones of the higher chakras, echoes the voices of the Gods; and the dance emulates the movements of the Gods.



□ True □ False	
66.2 Gurudeva also praised the merits of learning a	
creative skill requiring the use of one's hands such as (Check the incorrect answer)	
 A. Pottery B. Computer programming C. Sewing D. Gardening E. The building arts 	
66.3 Learning an art or skill takes hard work, willpower and dedication. These are strengths we (Check the correct answer)	
 □ A. Can apply to everything we do □ B. Can only be used in the art or skill itself 	

66.1 The ideal time to start learning singing, dancing or a

musical instrument is during the teenage years.

QUESTIONS for Lesson 66 (2)



66.4	Each skill or art gives us new ways of
upliftir	ng our friends, family and community. These
cultura	al and creative expressions are fulfilling to you
ae wal	

- □ True
- □ False

66.5 In the Hindu tradition, the number of cultural arts, or kalas is

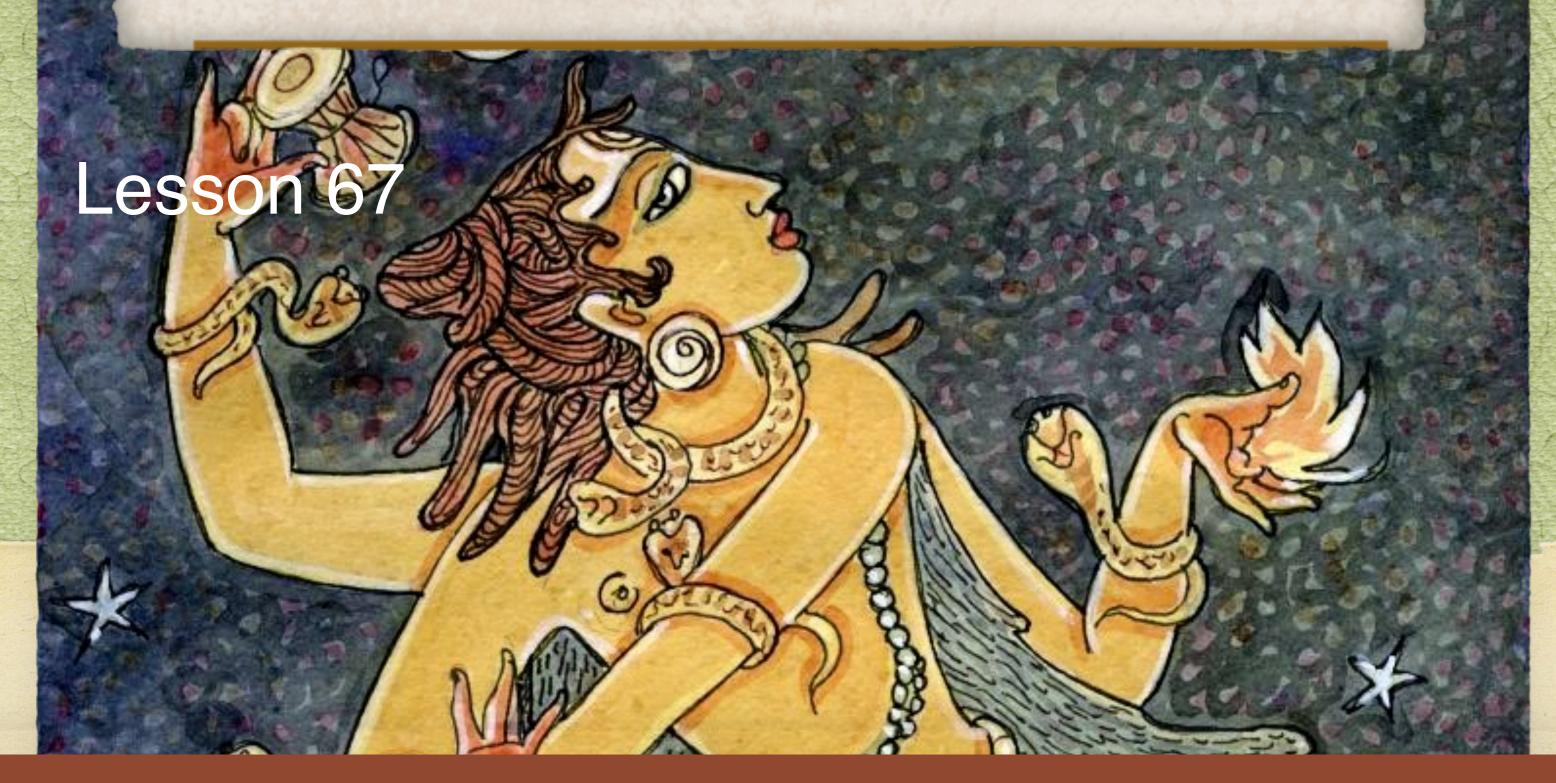
(Check the correct answer)

- □ A. Nine
- ☐ B. Sixty-four
- ☐ C. One hundred and eight

Path to Siva

A Catechism for Youth

Satguru Bodhinatha Veylanswami



How Can We Be Strong Saivite Hindus?

Religion or Way of Life?



Gurudeva taught:

"Once we have chosen and accepted our faith, it is then our spiritual duty to learn it well and live by it as a wholehearted, contributing member of a faith

We live our religion and pass to...

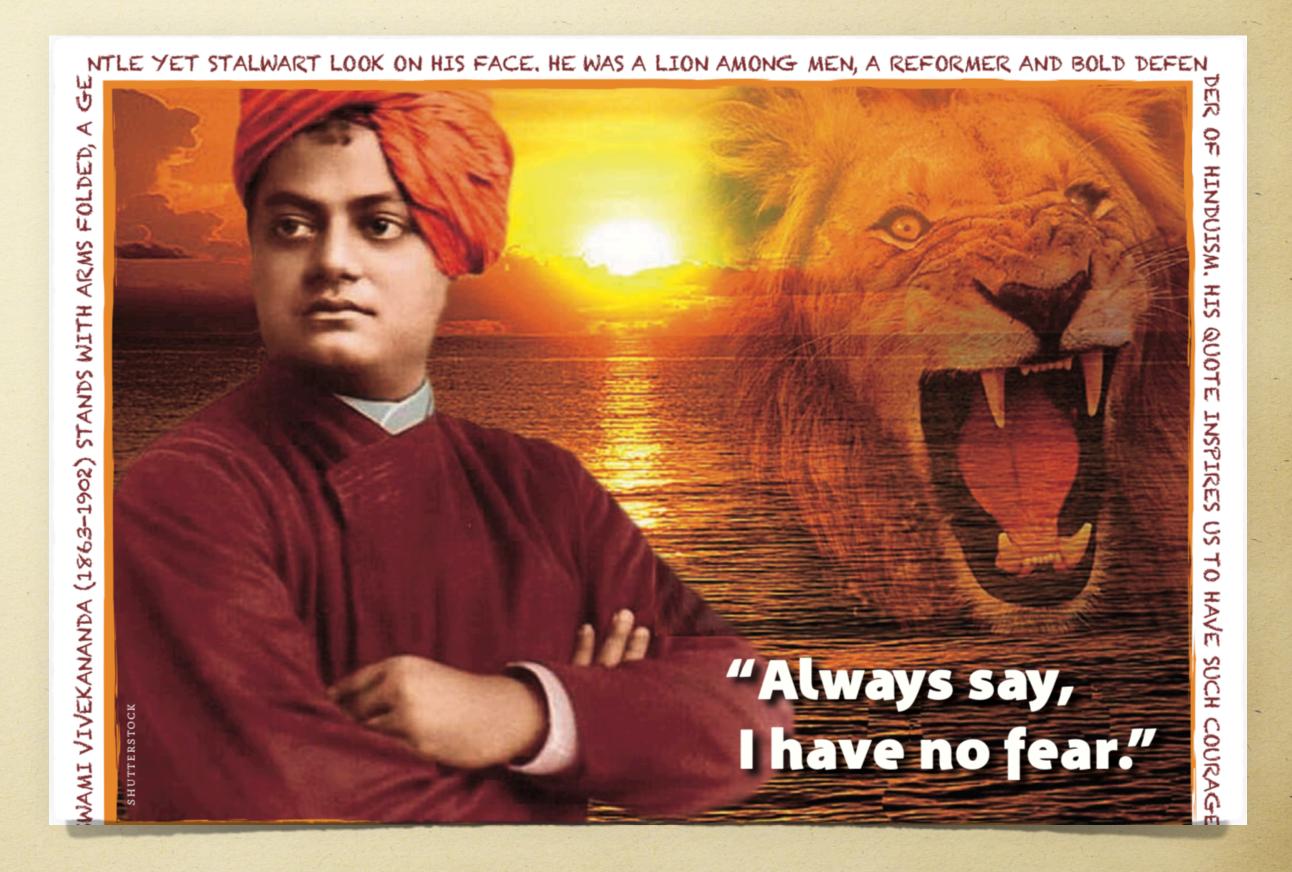
"Once we have chosen and accepted our faith, it is then our spiritual duty to learn it well and live by it as a wholehearted, contributing member of a faith community so that we pass it on in a vibrant way to those who come after us, the next generation."



Learn and understand well...

To be strong Hindus, first we must learn our religion well.

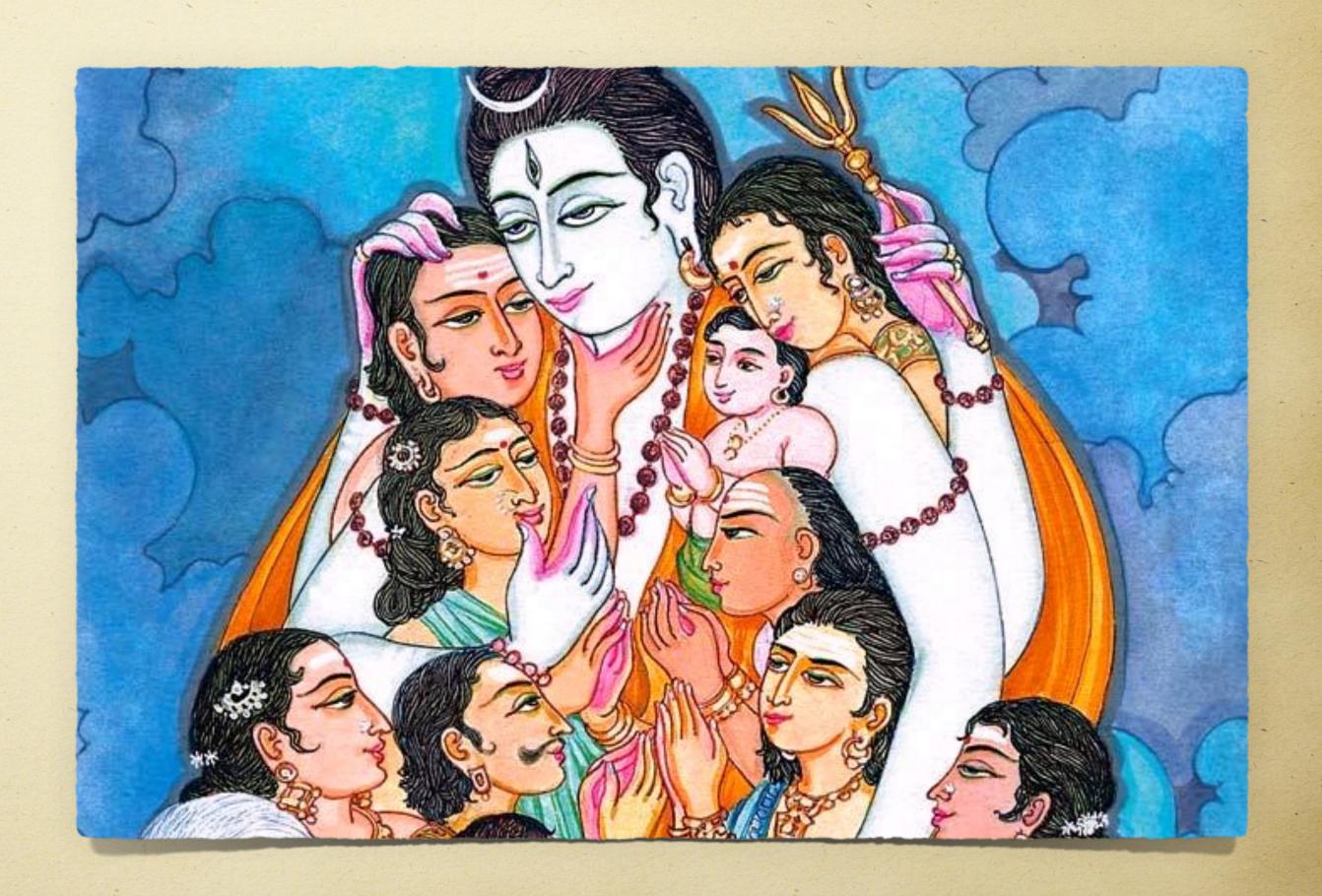
This means gaining a good understanding of the philosophy, the culture and the subtle mysticism.



Live our religion fully.

Second, we must live by it fully. This means having a solid commitment, a good character, and putting its principles into practice.

For us, this includes adopting the gestures, attitudes, customs, ways of worship, dress and refinements of Tamil Saiva culture.



Passing our faith to others

The third step is passing our faith along to others.

We all live in mixed societies, interrelating with people of varied backgrounds.



Questions about your religion...

You may find yourself being asked about your Hindu faith. Some questioners may have no religion.

Others may reject religion and believe science has all the answers.



Common questions...

You may be confronted by their questions:

"Do you worship cows?"

"Why are there so many Hindu Gods?

Why do you wear the dot on your forehead?"



Give answers with confidence.

Prepare yourself by studying the answers to such questions.

Respond with confidence and kindness.

Assume that the person really wants to learn.



Some asks questions to harass you.

Yes, some may want to harass you, or turn you to their view.

If you sense this is the case, smile and dismiss yourself without engaging further.



How to share your faith with others?

You can also share your faith by

conducting classes or sharing at public gatherings.

In sum, we each stand strong for Hinduism by being good Hindus.

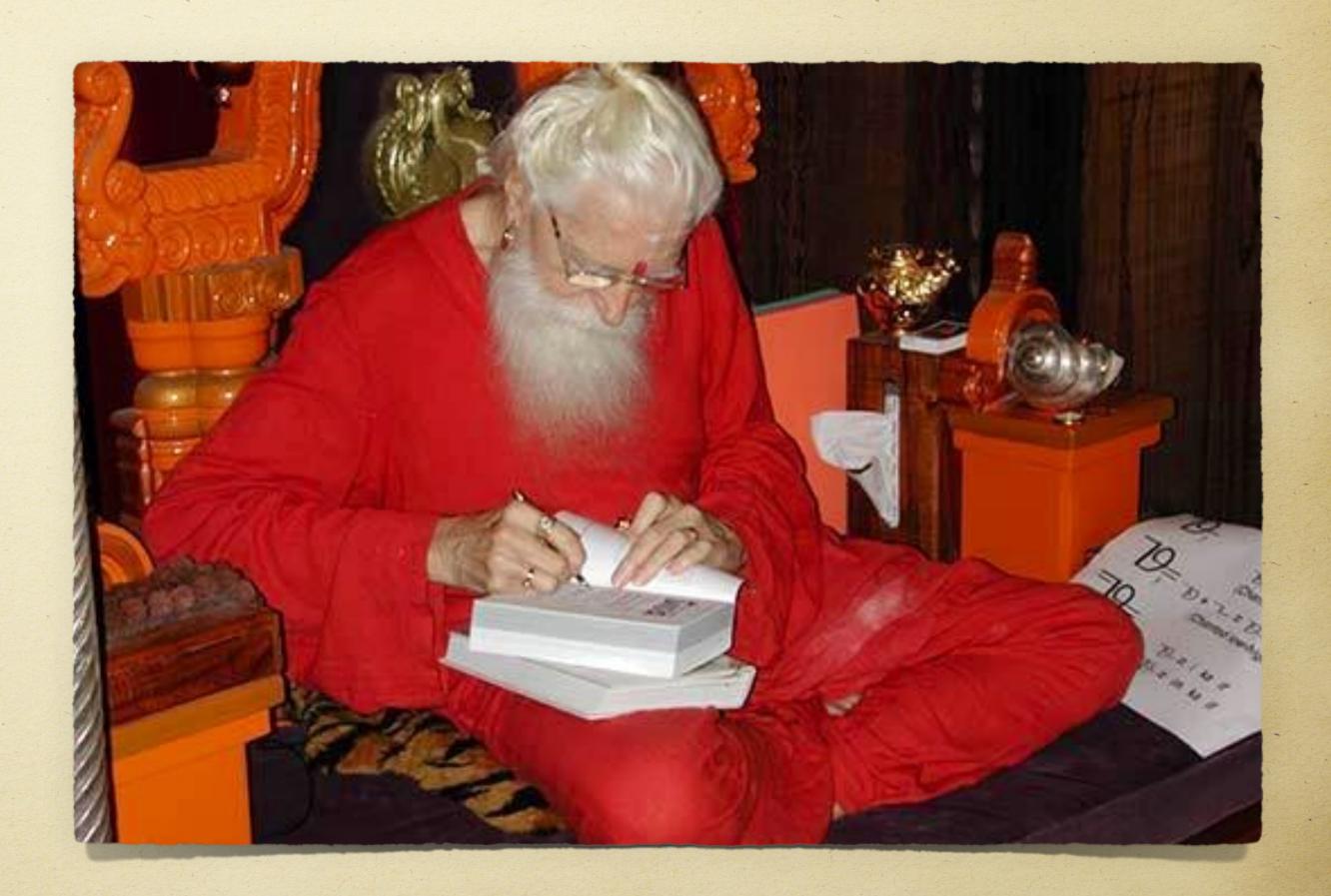
Gurudeva has given us the tools in his Master Course Trilogy, *Dancing, Living* and *Merging with Siva*.

Using these tools of philosophy, culture and yoga, we can defend, explain, protect, preserve and promote our Saiva faith.



Gurudeva says...

The time has come for Hindus of all races, all nations, of all cultures, of all sects to stand up and let the peoples of the world know of the great religion of which they are one of the staunch adherents.



67.1 The three steps in being a strong Saivite Hindu are (Number them 1 - 3 in the correct order) Learn our religion well Pass it along to others Live by it fully	
67.2 Enter the letter from below of A - C for the phrase that correctly completes the idea.	
 We must learn our religion well We must live by it fully We must pass our faith along to others 	
 (A) To those who come after us, the next generation (B) This means have a solid commitment, a good character and putting its principles into practice. (C) This means gaining a good understanding of the philosophy, the culture and the subtle mysticism 	
67.3 To successfully answer the questions you are asked about Hinduism (Check the correct answer)	
 □ A. Prepare yourself by studying the answers to such questions □ B. Respond with confidence and kindness □ C. Assume the person really wants to learn □ D. All of the above 	

QUESTIONS for Lesson 67

67.4 If you determine that the person wants to harass you or turn you to their view, smile and dismiss yourself without engaging further.
□ True

67.5 In sum, we each stand strong for Hinduism by being good Hindus.

□ True

□ False

□ False

Path to Siva

A Catechism for Youth

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Lesson 68

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How Do We View Other Faiths?

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The greatest religion

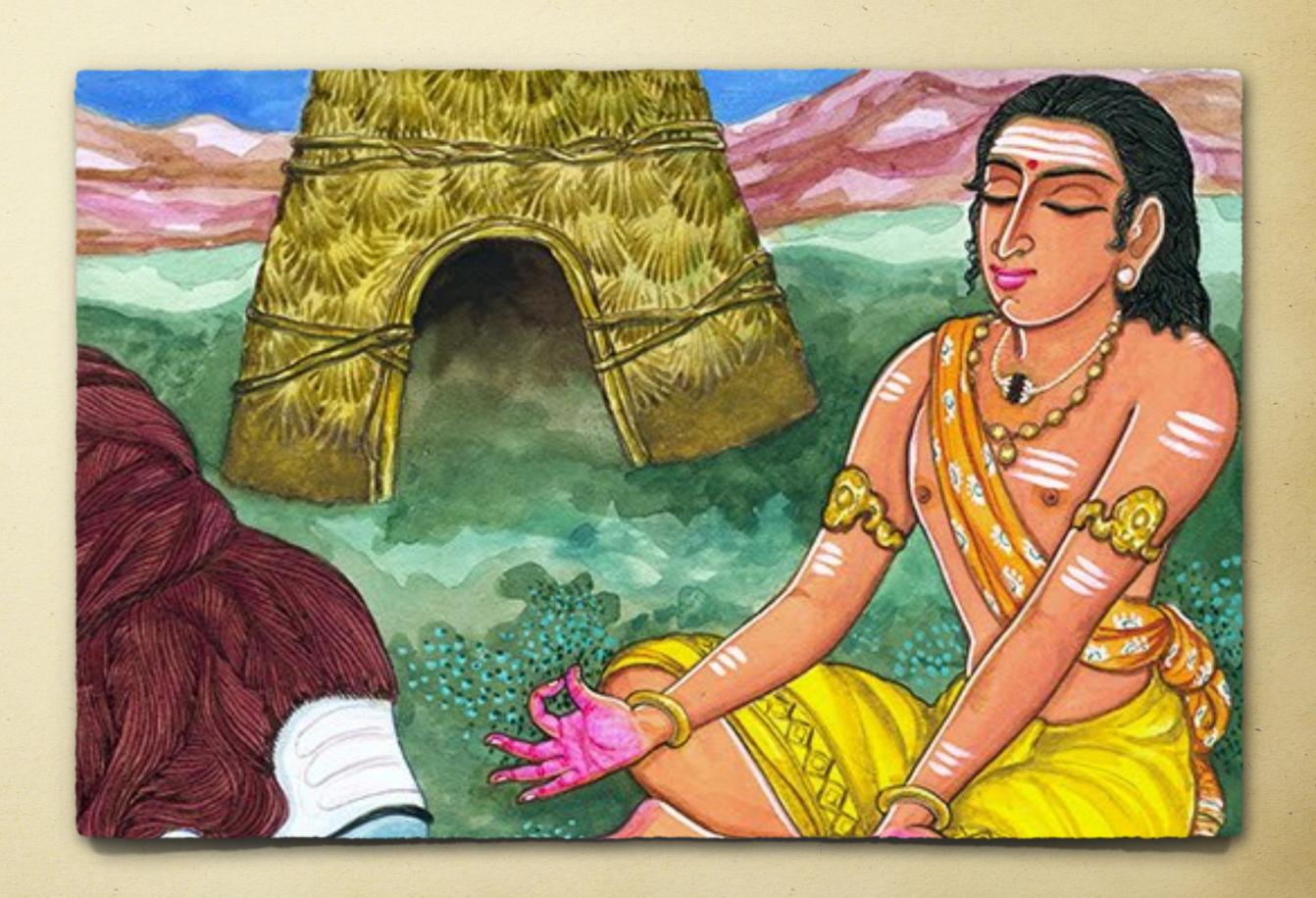


Devout Hindus, secure in their sadhana, hold their faith in highest esteem.

Gurudeva boldly called it the greatest religion in the world.

Deep philosophy and yoga practices.

Its refined culture, deep philosophy, grand temples and yoga practices offer more than we could explore and enjoy in a hundred lifetimes.



No sense of "only path"

Yet, there is no sense whatsoever in Hinduism of an "only path."

Rather, the Eternal Path is seen reflected in all religions.

We hold a profound tolerance and affection for those of all other religions.



Tolerance towards other faiths

Rather, the Eternal Path is seen reflected in all religions.

We hold a profound tolerance and affection for those of all other religions.



All religions are not the same

At the same time, we know that all religions are not the same.

Each has its unique beliefs, practices and scriptures, and the doctrines of one often conflict with others.

Even such difference should never be cause for religious tension or intolerance.



Saivites are faithful to their religion

Saivites seek to be faithful to their own path, following it without getting sidetracked into practices of other faiths or movements.

We defend our faith and avoid the enchantment of other ways.

Being content in our path, we encourage others to follow and defend their religion.



We never seek to convert others...

There is a great strength in loyalty to a religion and undistracted focus on its beliefs, teachings and cultural gifts.

Hindus never seek to convert others to our faith, though we do accept sincere seekers into the fold.



We say 'no' to unethical practices.

We stand strong against unethical efforts by those of any faith who try to draw Hindus away from their religion in times of distress or weakness.



Gurudeva summarises...

Gurudeva summarized, "We respect all religious traditions and the people within them.

Good citizens and stable societies are created from groups of religious people.

Still, Saivites defend their faith, proceed contentedly with their practices and avoid the enchant- ment of other ways, be they ancient or modern



Gurudeva says...

The people who are Hinduism share a mind structure.

They can understand, acknowledge, accept and love the peoples of all religions, encompass them within their mind as being fine religious people.



Gurudeva called Hinduism

(Check the correct answer)

- □ A. The second greatest religion in the world.
- ☐ B. The greatest religion in the world
- □C. One of the great religions in the world

QUESTIONS for Lesson 68 //



68.2 Check the correct answer

- ☐ A. All religions are the same as their beliefs and practices are identical
- ☐ B. All religions are not the same as each has its unique beliefs and practices

68.3 Saivites seek to be faithful to their own path, following it without getting sidetracked into practices of other faiths or movements.

- □ True
- □ False

68.4 Check the correct answer

- ☐ A. Hindus aggressively seek to convert others to our faith
- □ B. Hindus never seek to convert others to our faith, though we do accept sincere seekers into the fold.

Hindus don't object to the unethical efforts by those of any faith who try to draw Hindus away from their reli- gion in times of distress or weakness.

- □ True
- □ False