

Path to Siva

A Catechism for Youth

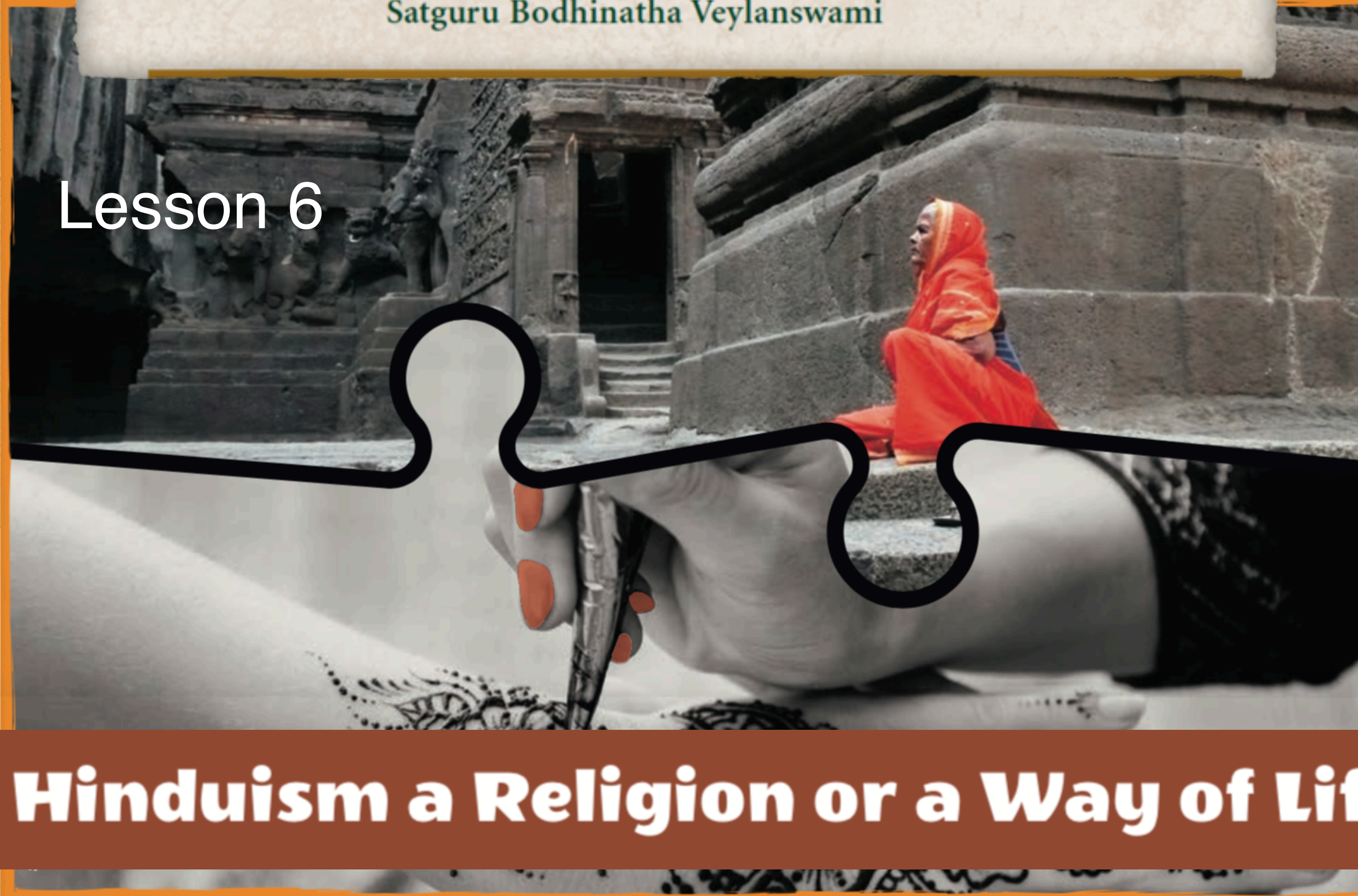
Satguru Bodhinatha Veylanswami

Lesson 6

Is Hinduism a Religion or a Way of Life?

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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.

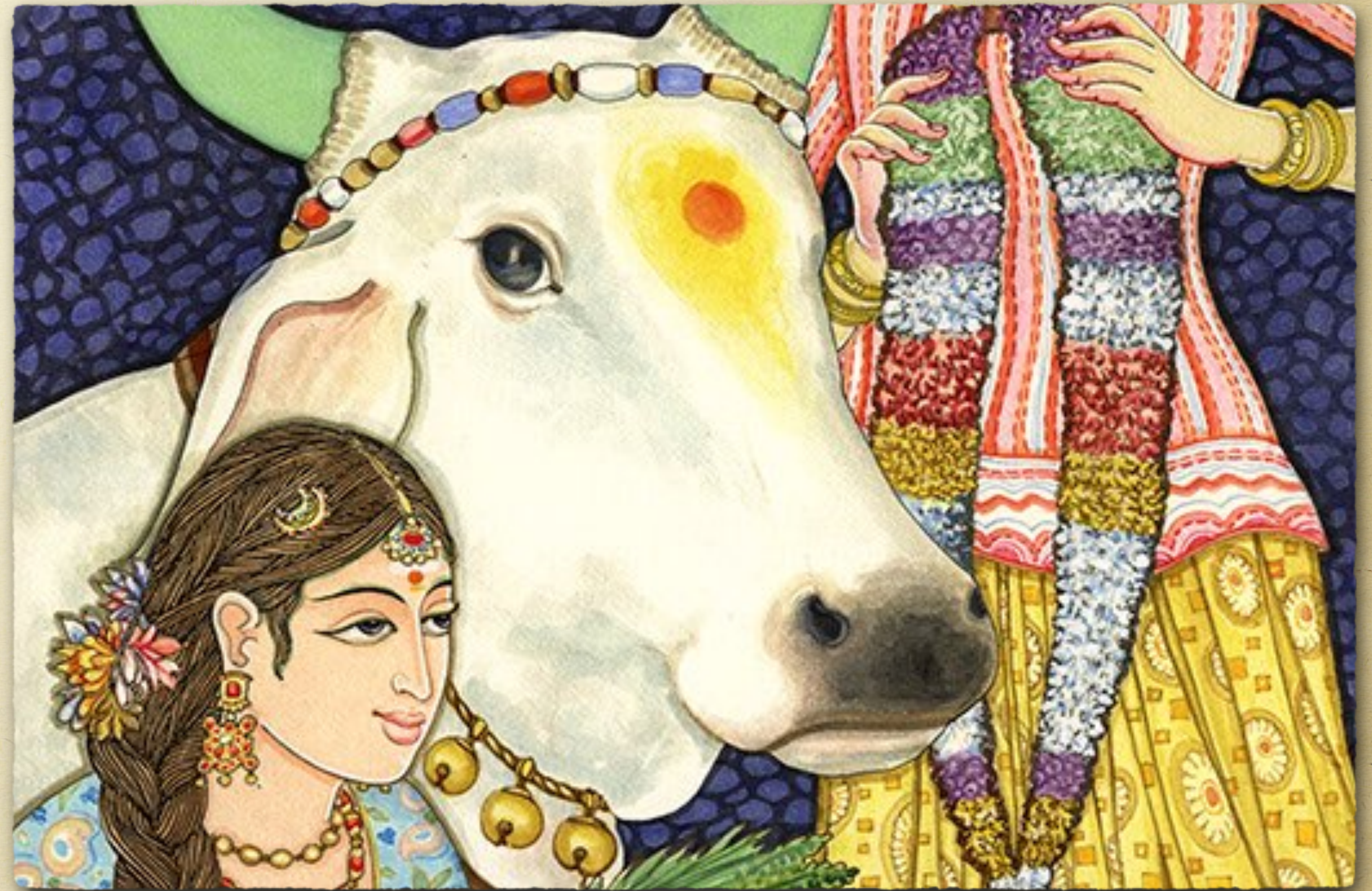
Entering the 21st century, Hinduism is recognized as the most compassionate, mystical and enlightened faith on the planet.



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.

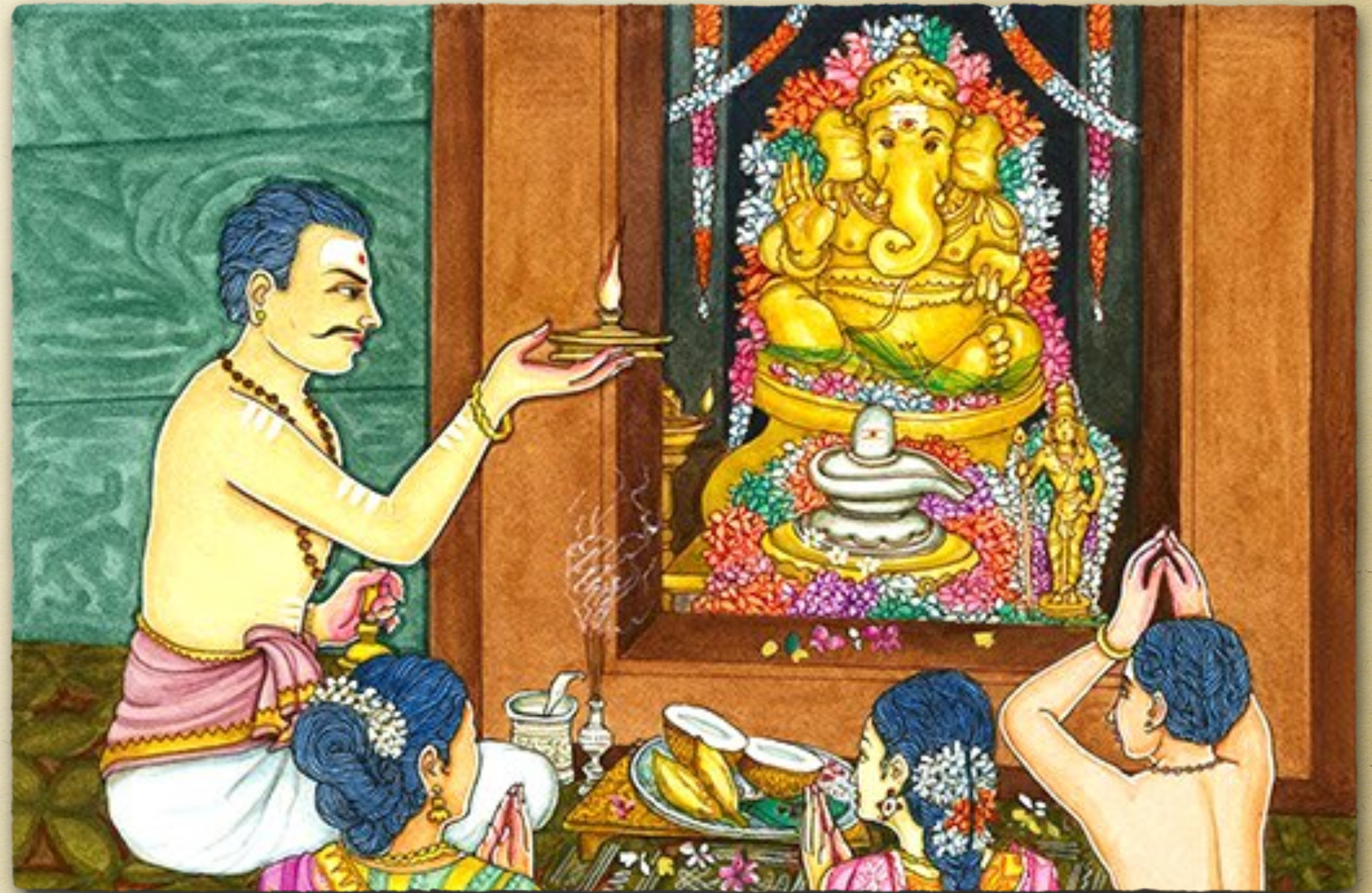
These values are being appreciated, as are Hinduism's sciences of yoga, vastu, jyotisha and ayurveda.



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.

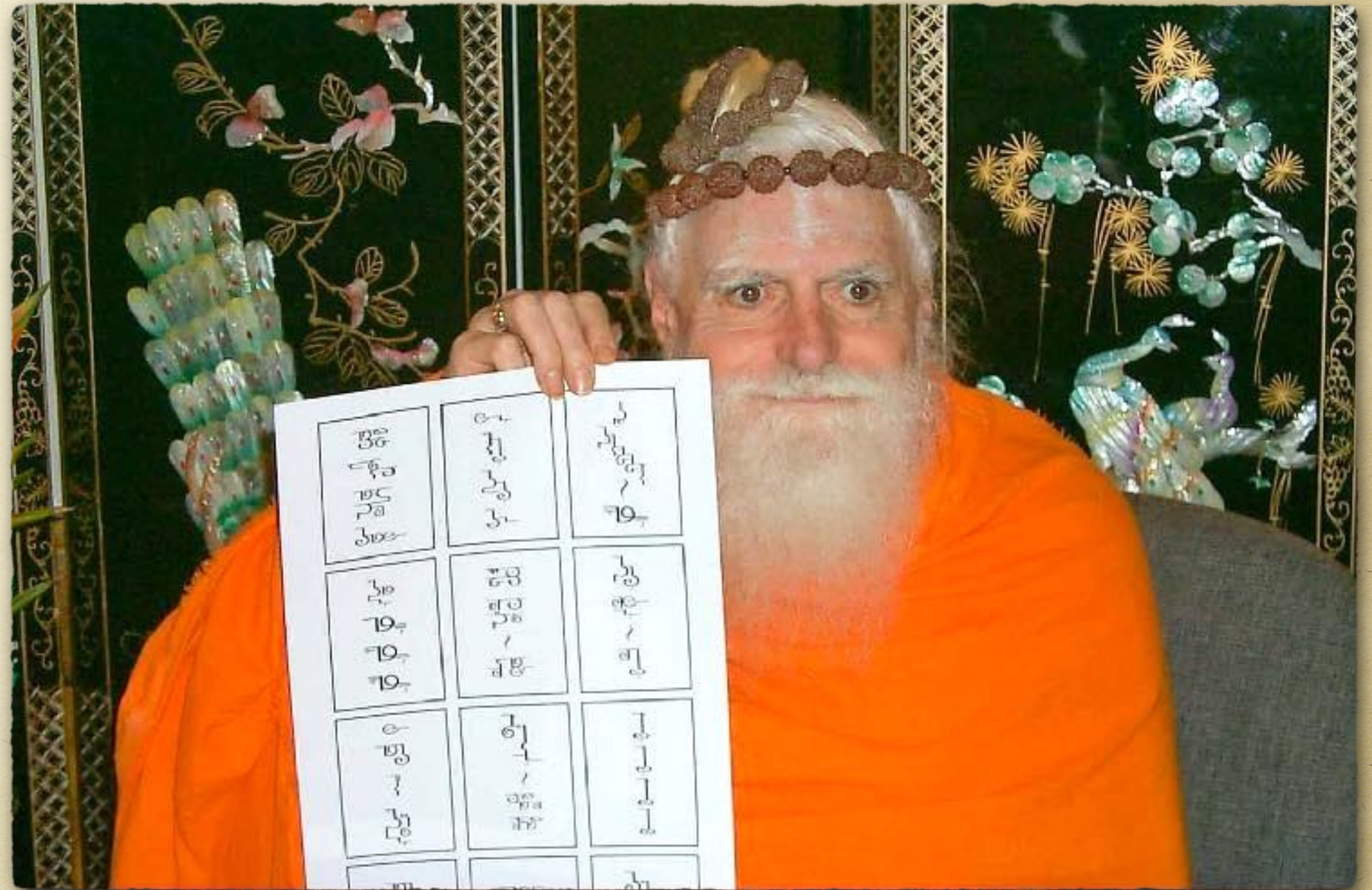
That can't happen if we avoid the name *Hinduism*.

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