

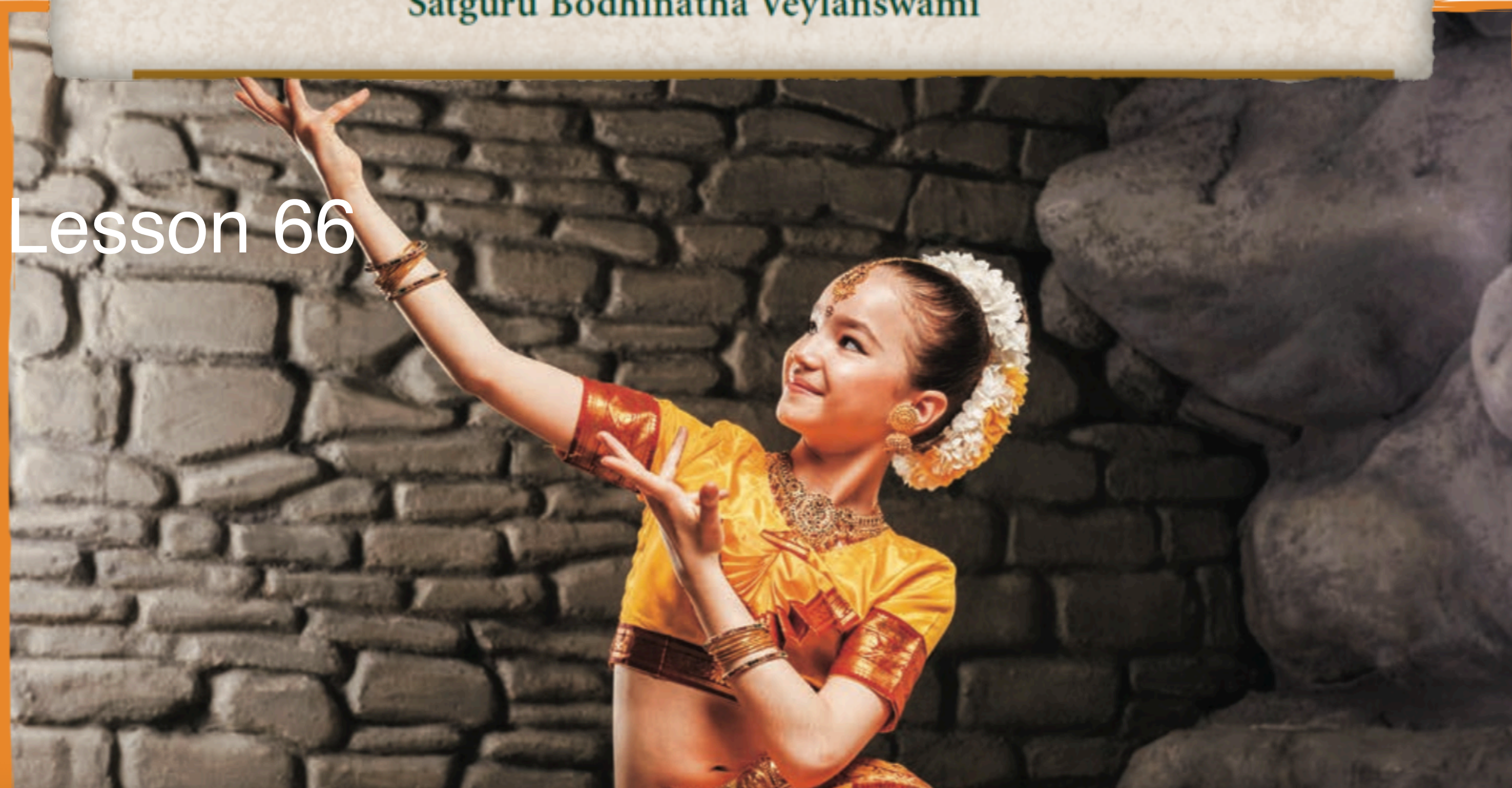
# Path to Siva

A Catechism for Youth

Satguru Bodhinatha Veylanswami

Lesson 66

IN SILK COSTUME GESTURES TOWARD THE DIVINE



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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.

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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.

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# Creative skill...with our hands...

The ideal time to start is in childhood.

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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.

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There are so many options for each of us.



# What can we learn?

You could learn a form of classical Indian dance.

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

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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.

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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.

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These are strengths you can apply to everything you do.

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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.

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You become an accomplished human being.

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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.

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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.

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

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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.



# QUESTIONS for Lesson 66



**66.1** The ideal time to start learning singing, dancing or a musical instrument is during the teenage years.

- 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

**66.4** Each skill or art gives us new ways of uplifting our friends, family and community. These cultural and creative expressions are fulfilling to you as well.

- 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