

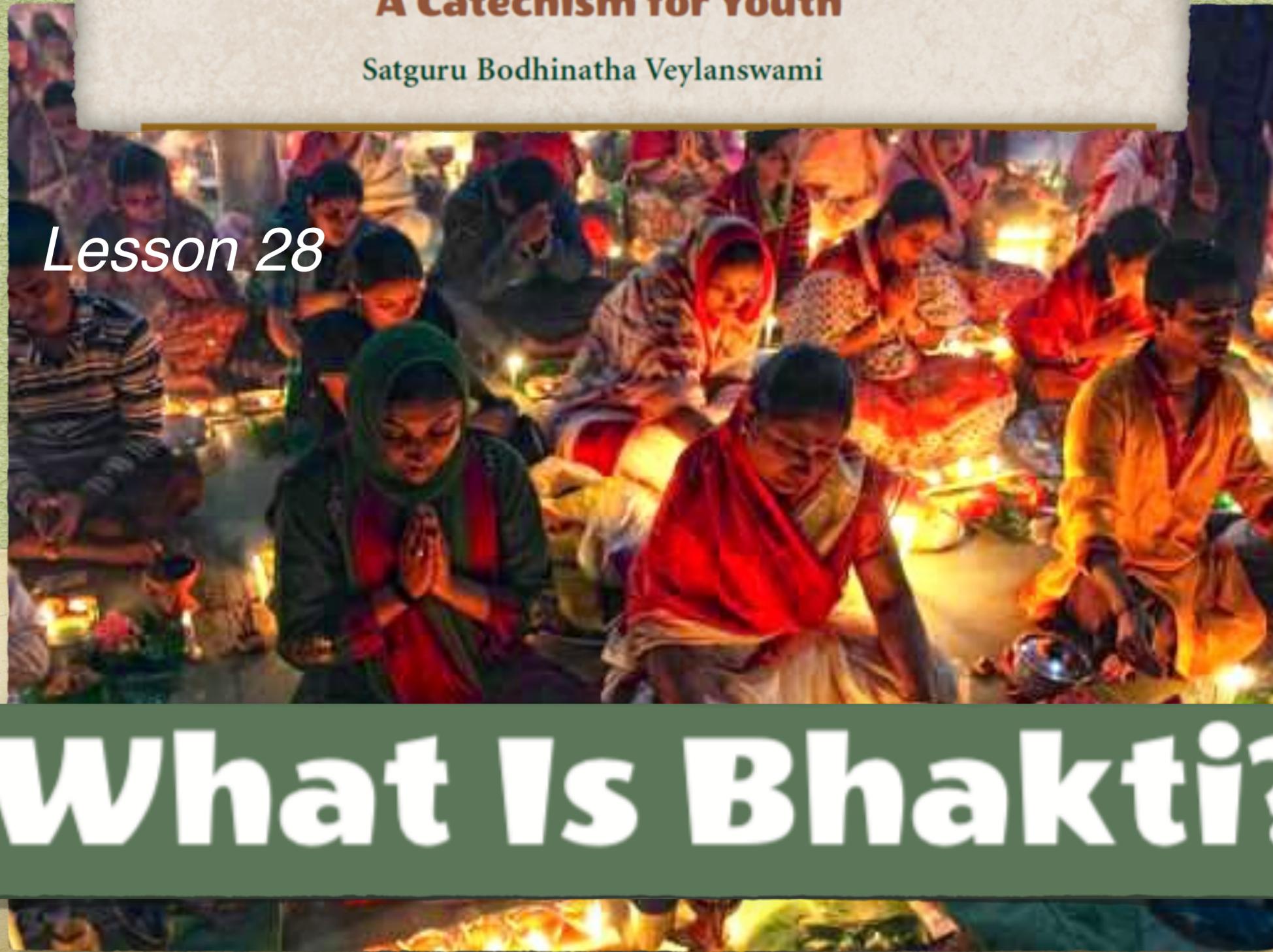
Path to Siva

A Catechism for Youth

Satguru Bodhinatha Veylanswami

Lesson 28

What Is Bhakti?



Bhakti



AT A ROADSIDE SHRINE IN INDIA A DEVOUT WOMAN APPROACHES THE GREAT GOD SIVA, SEEKING GUIDANCE AND BLESSINGS. HOLDING A TRISHULA IN HIS RIGHT HAND, THE MURTI HAS BEEN LOVINGLY ADORNED WITH SILK & FLOWERS.

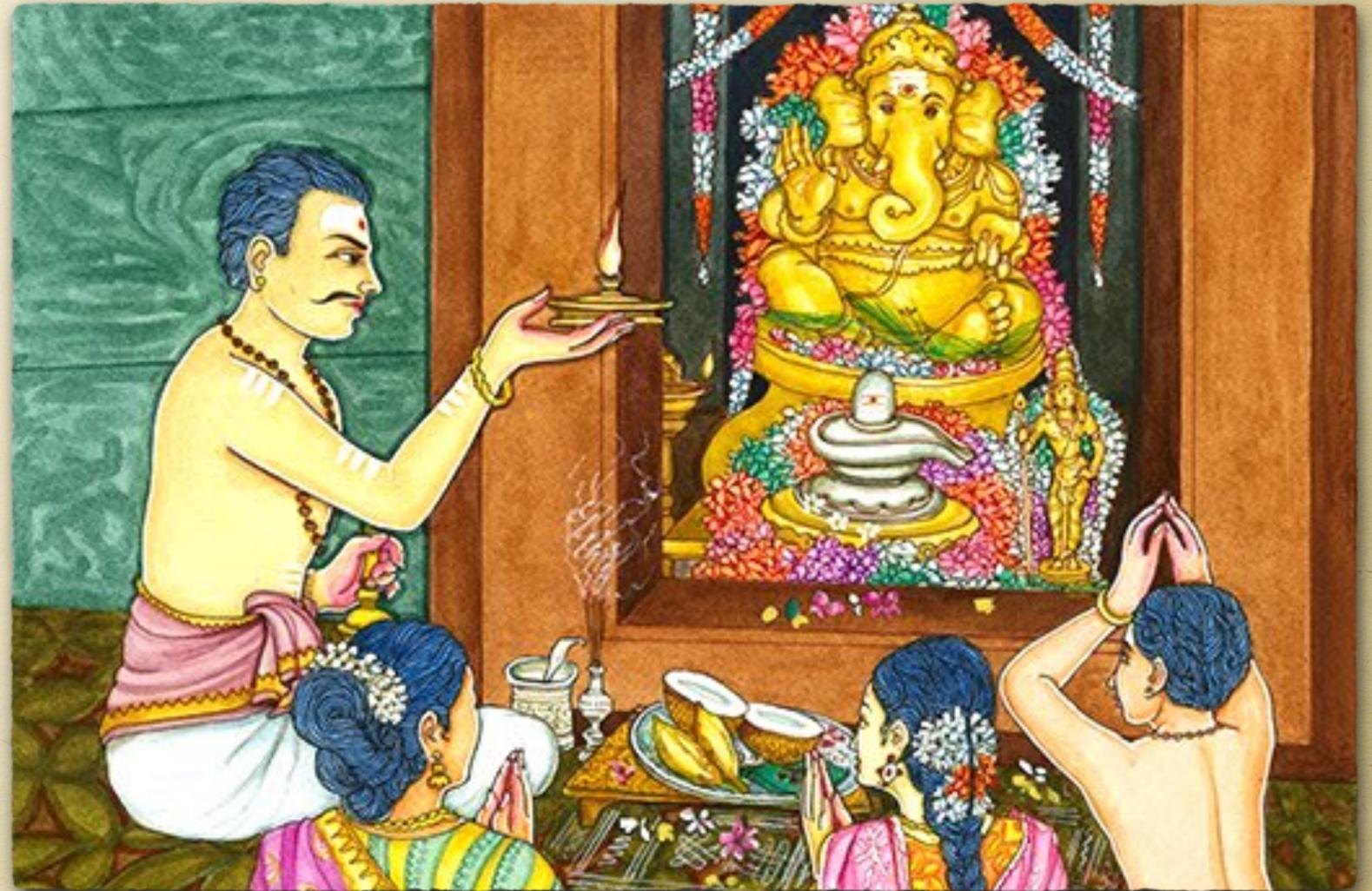
Bhakti is devotion love felt toward God, Gods and guru.

Bhakti Yoga

Bhakti yoga, the practice of expressing this love, is strong in most Hindu traditions

We express bhakti when we worship in our home shrine, attend the temple or travel on pilgrimage.”

The more we experience devotion, the more it grows within us.



Sacred songs and stories

This occurs when we sing sacred songs and chant bhajans.

Listening to stories of our great saints and satgurus inspires bhakti.



Bhakti is not just for beginners

In Saiva Siddhanta, bhakti yoga is never outgrown.

It is not just for beginners.

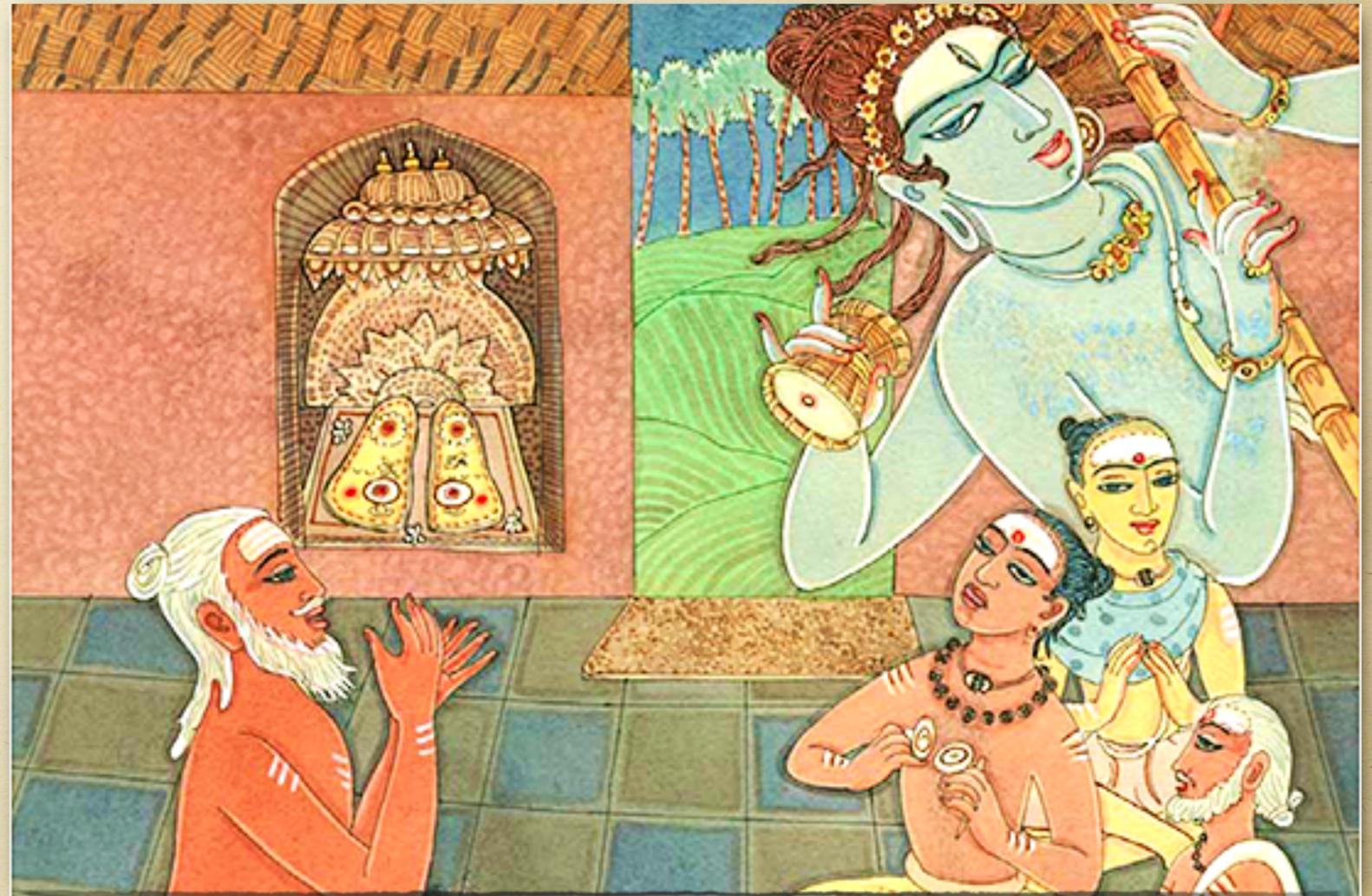
As Gurudeva said, “The yoga of pure devotion is found at the beginning, the middle and the end of the path.”



Opening ourselves to God's Grace

By awakening this love and appreciation,
we open ourselves to God's grace.

We also express bhakti toward our guru
as a way to experience his or her
blessings and grace.



What is devotion?

Devotion is a calm, intelligent expression
of love for the Deity.

It is not unlike the closeness felt between
good friends.



How is the path in Saiva Siddhanta?

In Saiva Siddhanta, the path begins at the charya stage, with getting to know the Gods and developing a relationship with them through service, or karma yoga.



Kriya yoga

Then Bhakti is naturally experienced.

This is the kriya stage.

Our nature becomes soft, flexible and content.

Gurudeva explained, “The inner knowing that ‘All is Siva’s will’ is one of the first benefits of bhakti yoga.”



Stability and success...

A close, loving relationship with God and the Gods gives us a great stability in life and allows for success in meditation.

If problems, or negative karmas, arise, the devotee can place them at the feet of the Deity to be dissolved.

When karmas are clear, the devotee is able to internalize his devotion into deeper meditations in the yoga stage.



Gurudeva says...

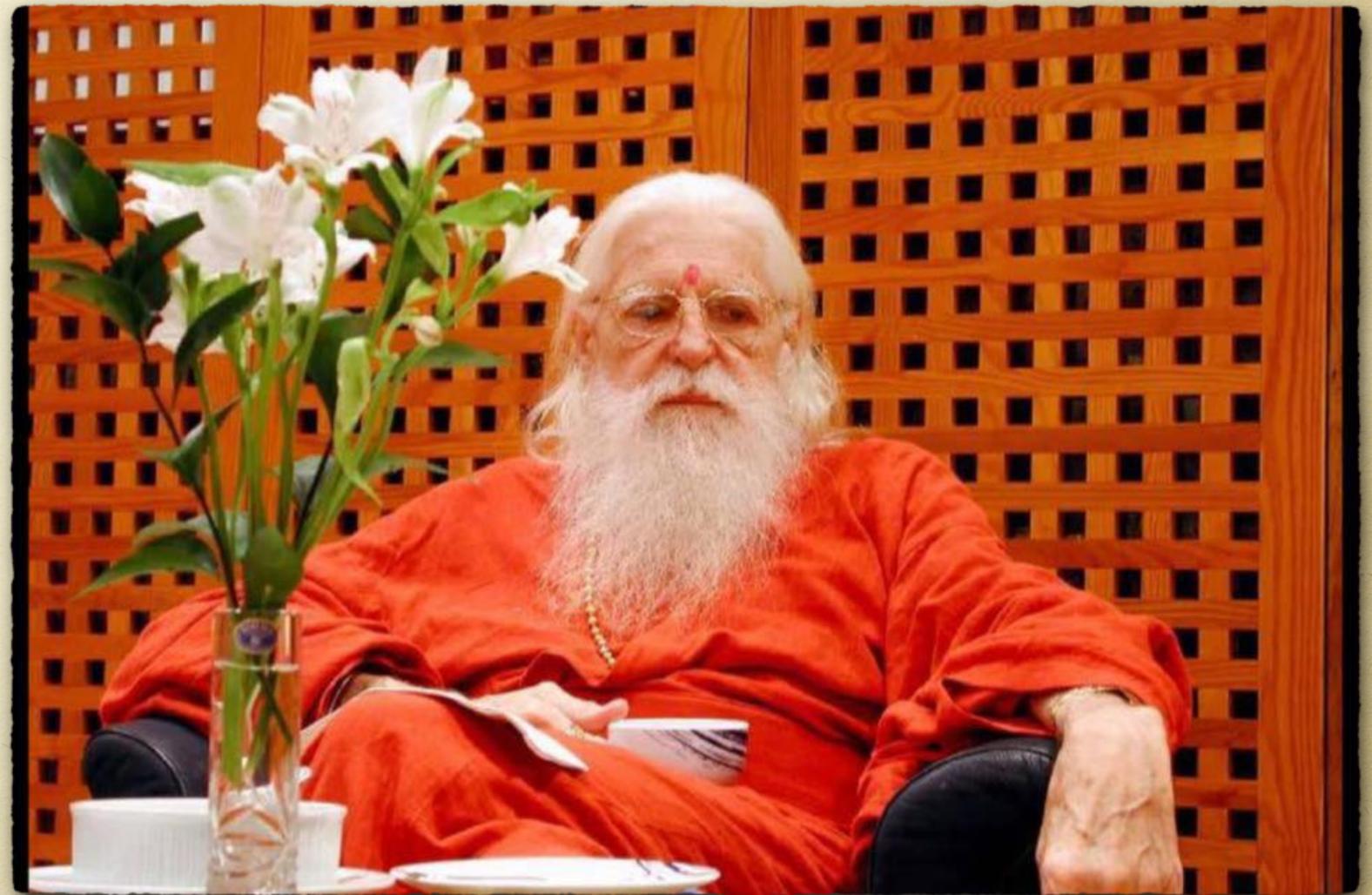
The greatest inhibiting factor in practicing bhakti yoga is the doubting, cynical, intellectual mind.

Doubt and skepticism harden the heart and narrow the mind.

When you have the energy of bhakti, of love, flowing through your body, meditation is easy.

You don't have to go through the preliminaries

You are already functioning in the higher chakras..



QUESTIONS for Lesson 28



28.1 We express bhakti yoga when we

(Check the incorrect answer)

- A. Worship in our home shrine
- B. Study the history of Hinduism
- C. Attend the temple
- D. Travel on pilgrimage

28.2 In Saiva Siddhanta, bhakti yoga is only for beginners.

- True
- False

28.3 God's grace

(Check the correct answer)

- A. Cannot be experienced
- B. Is experienced by awakening love and appreciation through bhakti yoga

28.4 When bhakti is naturally experienced our nature becomes

(Check the incorrect answer)

- A. Soft
- B. Flexible
- C. Discontent

28.5 A close, loving relationship with God and the Gods gives us a great stability in life and allows for success in meditation.

- True
- False