

Path to Siva

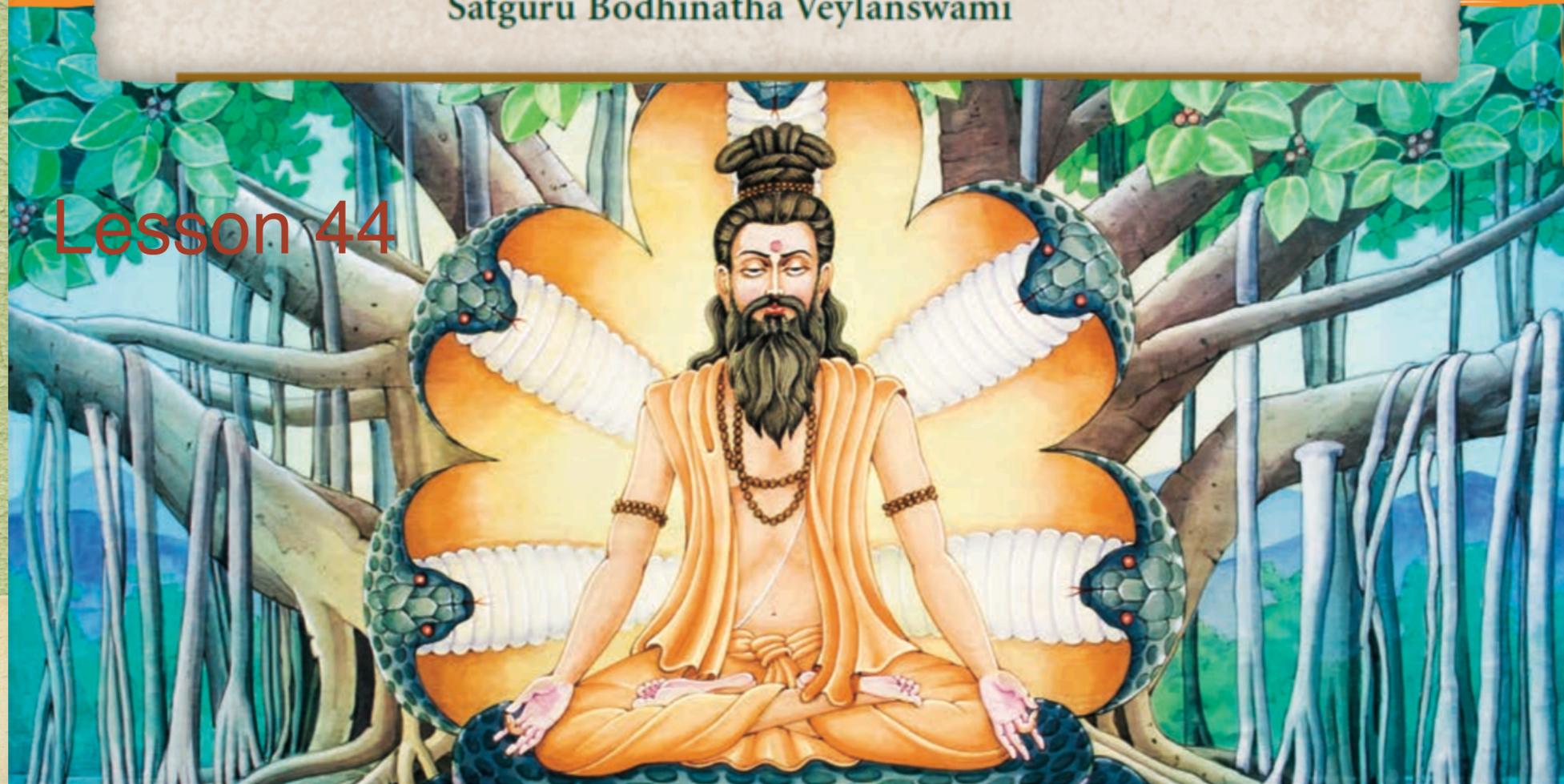
A Catechism for Youth

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Lesson 44



What Is Yoga?

Yoga means “Union”



Yoga meaning “union”, is Hinduism system of yoking our individual consciousness with transcendent or divine consciousness.

Sage Patanjali

Yoga was described by Sage Patanjali in his *Yoga Sutras* over 2,000 years ago as a system of meditation with eight limbs or stages.

Hence it is known as ashtanga (eightfold) yoga.



Raja Yoga

It is also known as raja yoga.

Patanjali defined it as “the restraint of mental activities.”



Yama and Niyama

Stages one and two are *yama* and *niyama*.

These define the spiritual lifestyle we need for success in meditation.



Asana

The third limb is *asana*, meaning “seat” or “posture,” learning to sit comfortably for long periods without moving.

This is achieved through hatha yoga, the postures of which balance the energies of mind and body, promoting health and serenity.



Pranayama

The fourth stage is *pranayama*, regulated breathing.

This is the science of controlling prana (subtle energy) through breathing techniques.



Pratyahara

Stage five is *pratyahara*, withdrawing awareness from the senses, emotions and thought.

Like a tortoise who withdraws its head and legs into its shell for protection, the yogi withdraws his awareness from the outside world and discovers the infinite world within.



Dharana

The sixth stage is *dharana*, concentration, focusing the mind on a single object or line of thought, not allowing it to wander.



Dyana

Stage seven is *dhyana*, true meditation.

Gurudeva described it as “a quiet, alert, powerfully concentrated state wherein new knowledge and insight pour into the field of consciousness.”

A good meditation teaches us something new about ourselves or the world.



Samadhi

The eighth and final stage is *samadhi*.

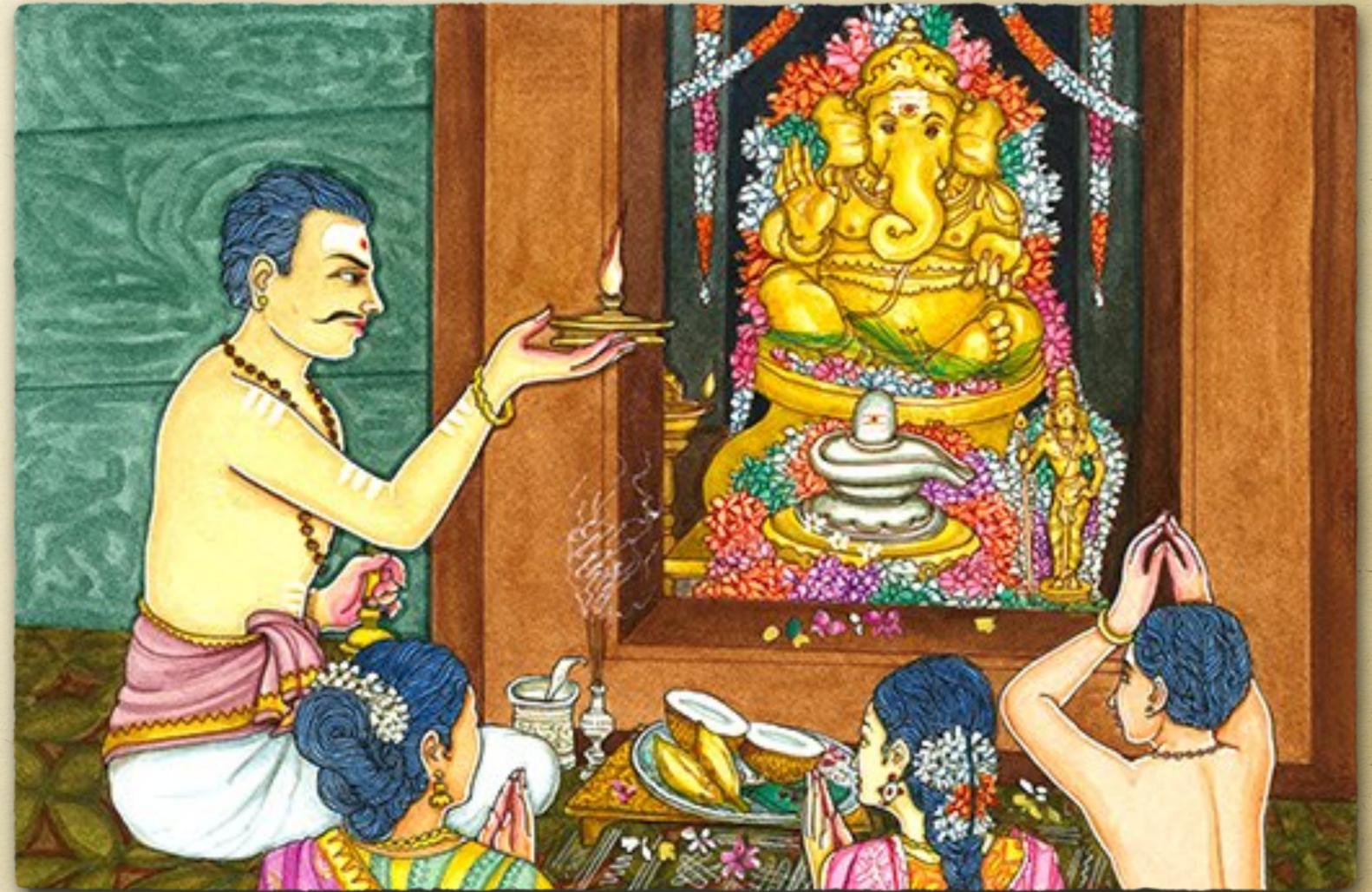
This is the goal of yoga, a state in which the meditator and the object of meditation are one.



Other forms of Yoga

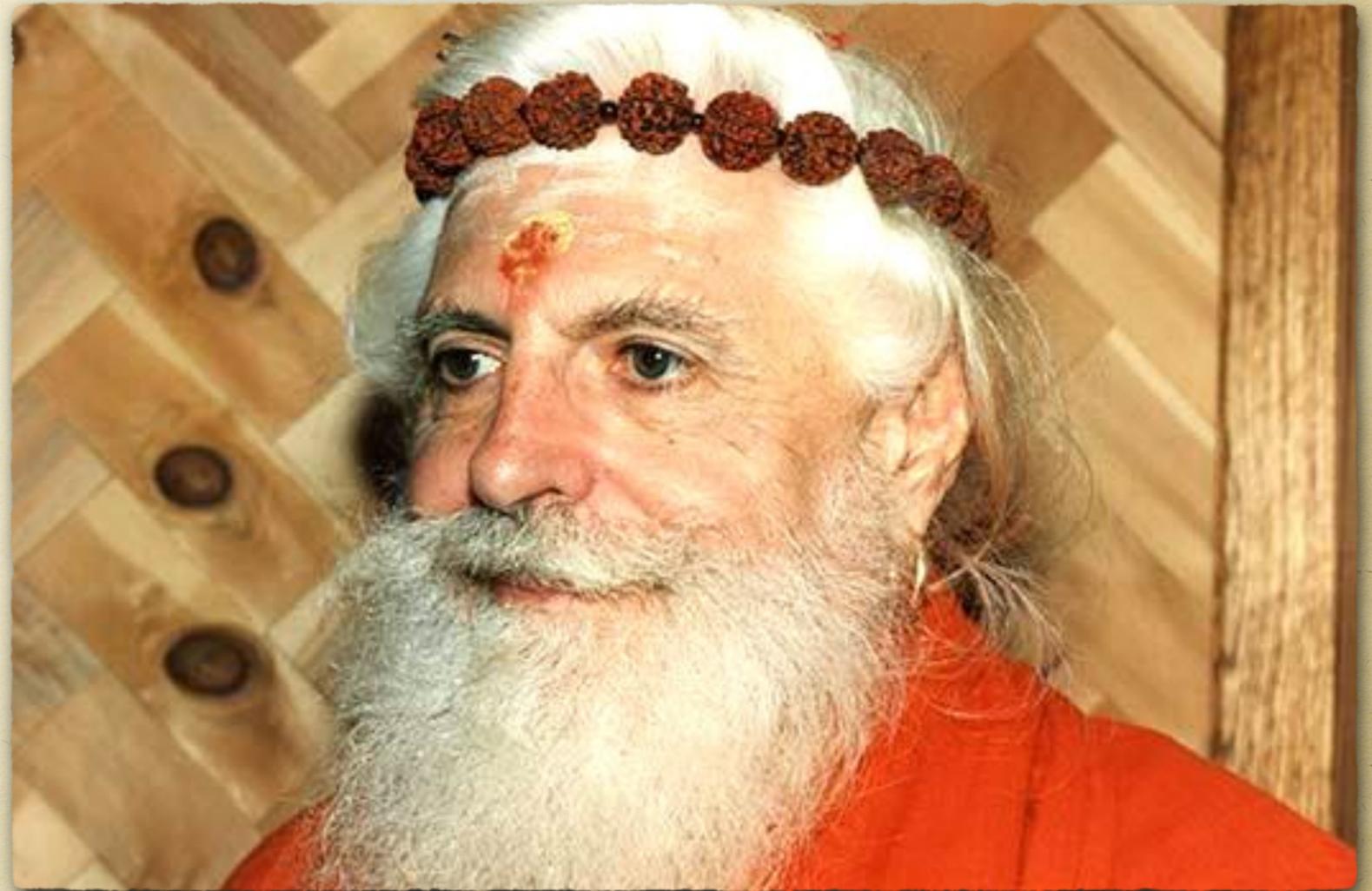
Over time, specialized forms of yoga have been developed.

For example, kriya yoga focuses on breath control, mantra and mudra; karma yoga transforms work into worship; bhakti yoga is union through devotion; and in some forms of hatha yoga, bodily perfection is the goal.



Gurudeva says...

If you just sit without moving, and breathe,...awareness is loosened from limited concepts and made free to move vibrantly and buoyantly into the inner depths where peace and bliss remain undisturbed for centuries.



QUESTIONS

for Lesson 44

44.1 Yoga is Hinduism's system of yoking our individual consciousness with the individual consciousness of another person.

- True
- False

44.2 Sage Patanjali's system of meditation described in his Yoga Sutras

(Check the incorrect answer)

- A. Was written over 2,000 years ago
- B. Has eight limbs or stages
- C. Is also known as hatha yoga

44.3 Enter the letter from below of A - H for the correct Sanskrit term for each of the stages of Patanjali's system of meditation.

- ___ Withdrawing awareness from the senses, emotions and thought
- ___ Meditator and the object of meditation are one
- ___ Observances
- ___ True meditation
- ___ Posture
- ___ Concentration
- ___ Restraints
- ___ Regulated breathing

- (A) Pranayama (B) Dharana (C) Niyama
(D) Dhyana
(E) Samadhi (F) Yama
(G) Pratyahara (H) Asana

44.4 Number in the correct order from 1 - 8 each of the stages of Patanjali's system of meditation.

- ___ Withdrawing awareness from the senses, emotions and thought
- ___ Meditator and the object of meditation are one
- ___ Observances
- ___ True meditation
- ___ Posture
- ___ Concentration
- ___ Restraints
- ___ Regulated breathing

44.5 Enter the letter from below of A - D for the correct name of the specialized form of yoga for the description given

- ___ Focuses on breath control, mantra and mudra
- ___ Transforms work into worship
- ___ Union through devotion
- ___ Bodily perfection is the goal in some of its forms

- (A) Hatha yoga (B) Kriya yoga (C) Bhakti yoga (D) Karma yoga