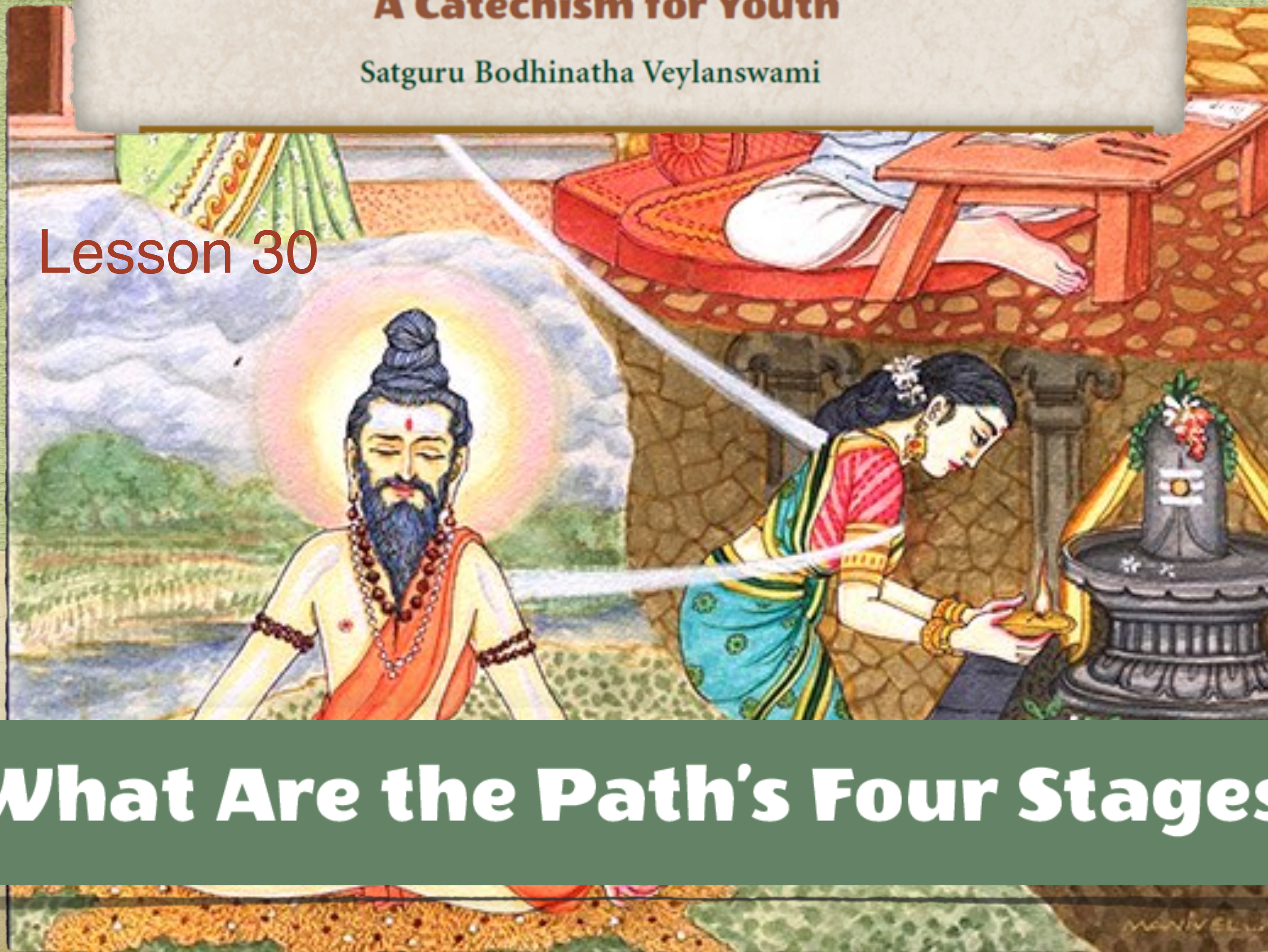


Path to Siva

A Catechism for Youth

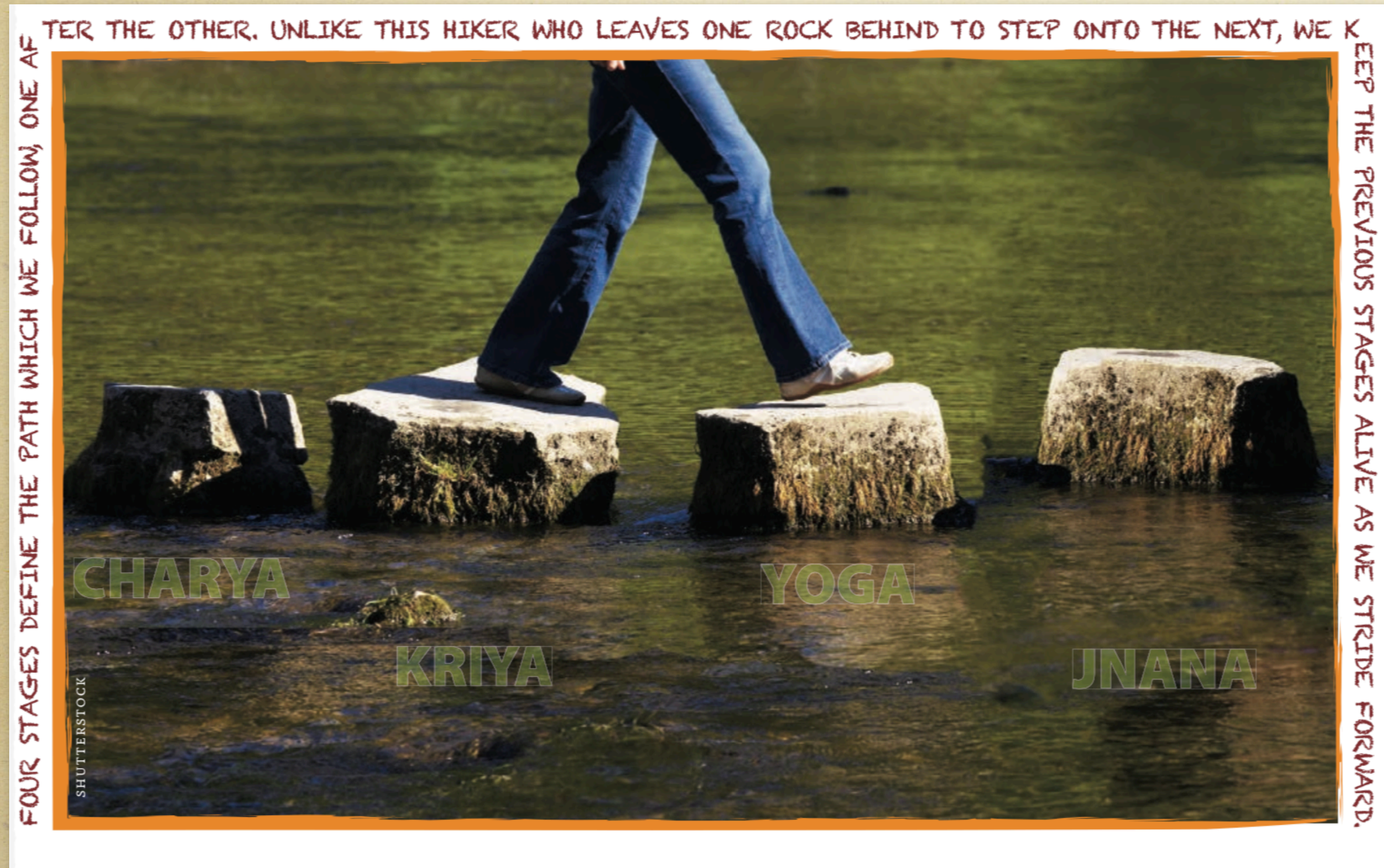
Satguru Bodhinatha Veylanswami

Lesson 30



What Are the Path's Four Stages?

Four stages to “grow up”.



When created by Lord Siva, the soul is young and immature.

Its process of “growing up” over many lifetimes happens in four stages.

Like the lotus flower...

This is much like the development of a lotus flower.

First it sends its roots into the pond's mud, then it grows a stem and leaves that reach the water's surface.

Finally it blossoms in the full sun.

Yet each previous stage of growth is still there supporting the flower.

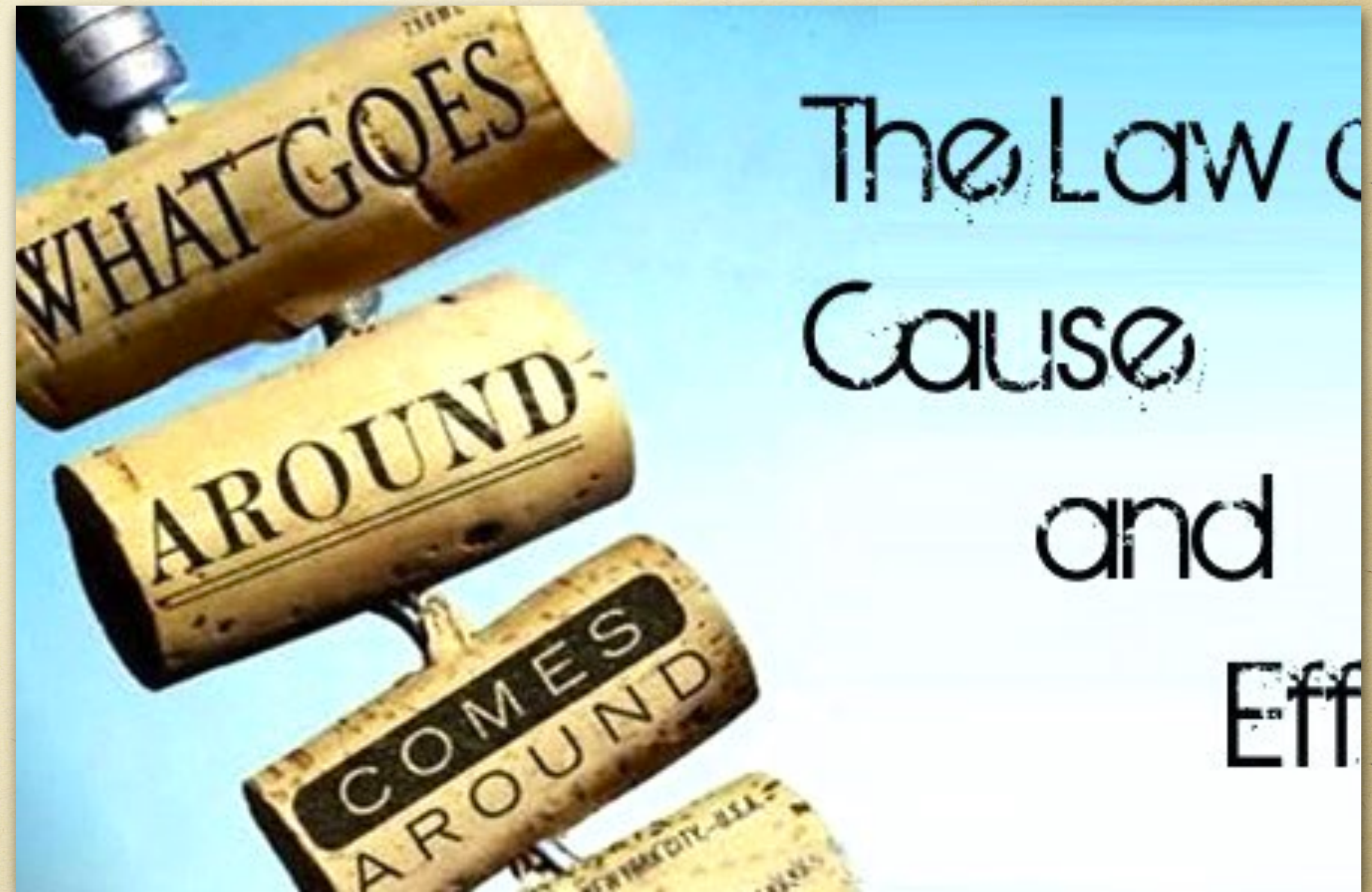


Growing under the divine rule of karma

Siva's grace guides this process so that we learn and grow toward the light through experience, under the divine law of karma.

As the soul progresses through each stage, it becomes less instinctive and more spiritual.

Siva is continually creating souls, so at any point in time, there are on the Earth young souls, adolescent souls, middle-aged souls and old souls.



The four *padas*: stages of maturation

The four *padas*, stages of maturation, are *charya*, *kriya*, *yoga* and *jnana*.



First stage: Chariya

Charya is good conduct and humble service, attending the temple and helping with temple chores.

Here, the main work is harnessing the instincts and developing virtuous qualities.



Second stage: kriya

Kriya is the stage of devotion, or love of God, expressed through home puja and temple worship.



Third stage: Yoga

Yoga is the period of meditation and inner striving under a guru's guidance.

At this stage, the temple is a sacred space for contemplation as Siva's veiling power gives way to His revealing grace.



Fourth stage: Jnana

Jnana is the wisdom state, where the realized soul sees himself as one with the temple Deity.”



Padas: Not alternate but progressive steps

AsThe four padas are not alternate ways, but progressive steps on a one path called San Marga.

Next, Nor does the soul give up the practices of one pada when it enters the next.

Thus the mature soul in jnana is a paragon of wisdom, yoga, devotion and virtue.

The greatest yogis still love and worship Siva.

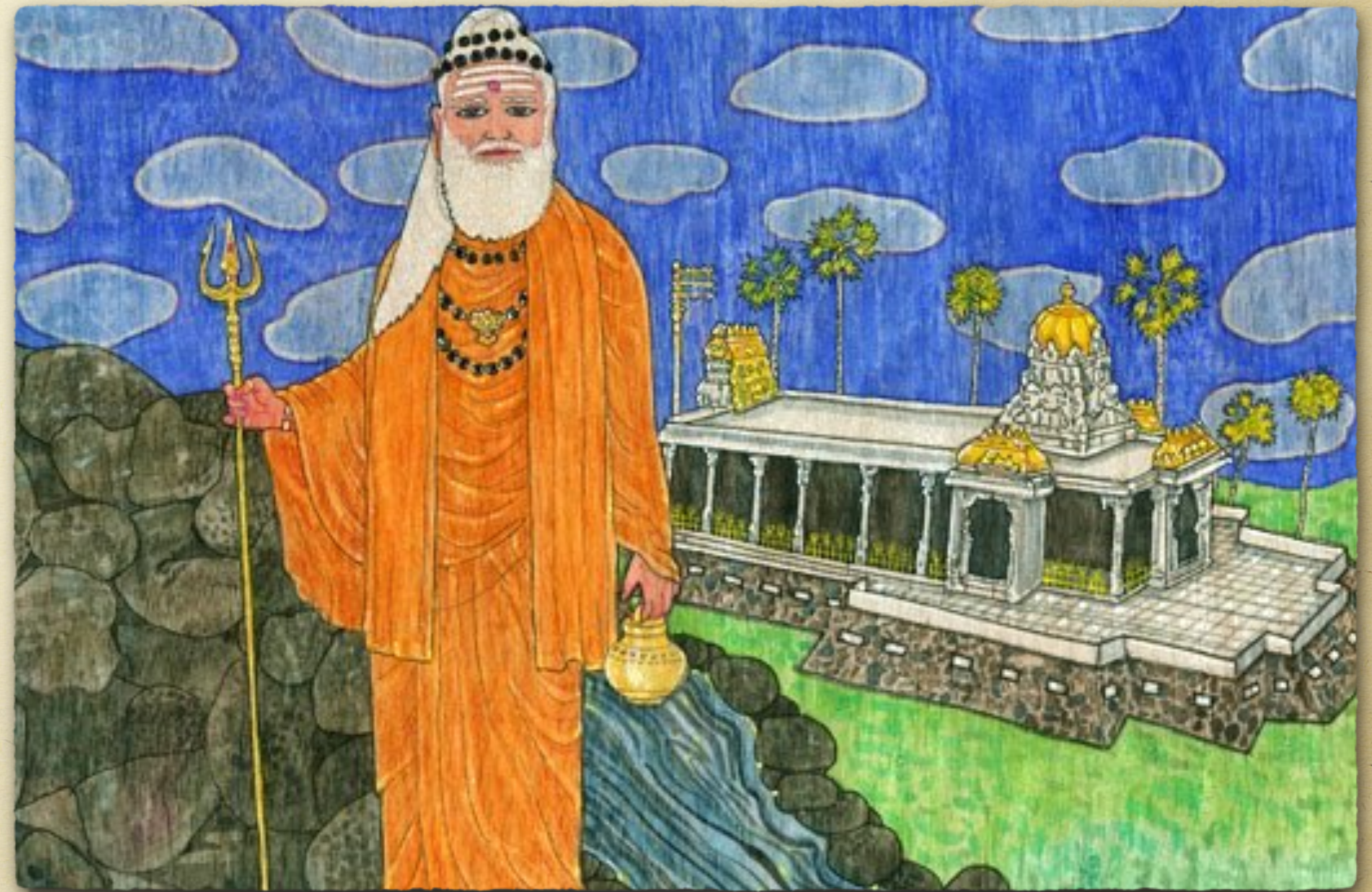


Gurudeva says...

Some people think, “When you get to the yoga stage, you don’t have to do the worship, you don’t have to do the service.

You just do the yoga.” In our Saiva Siddhanta philosophy, when you get to the yoga stage and the jnana stage, you still enjoy the worship, you still enjoy the service.

These are dear and intricate parts of your life.



QUESTIONS for Lesson 30



30.1 Number from 1 - 3 in the correct order of the stages of growth of a lotus flower.

- ___ It blossoms in the full sun
- ___ It sends its roots into the pond's mud
- ___ It grows a stem and leaves that reach the water's surface

30.2 As the soul progresses through each stage, it becomes less spiritual and more instinctive.

- True
- False

30.3 Enter the letter from below of A - D for the pada name that matches the description.

- ___ The period of meditation and inner striving under a guru's guidance
- ___ Good conduct and humble service, attending the temple and helping with temple chores
- ___ The wisdom state, where the realized soul sees himself as one with the temple Deity
- ___ Stage of devotion, expressed through home puja and temple worship

(A) Charya (B) Kriya (C) Yoga (D) Jnana

30.4 The four padas are not alternate ways, but progressive steps on a one path called San Marga.

- True
- False

30.5 The soul gives up the practices of one pada when it enters the next.

- True
- False