

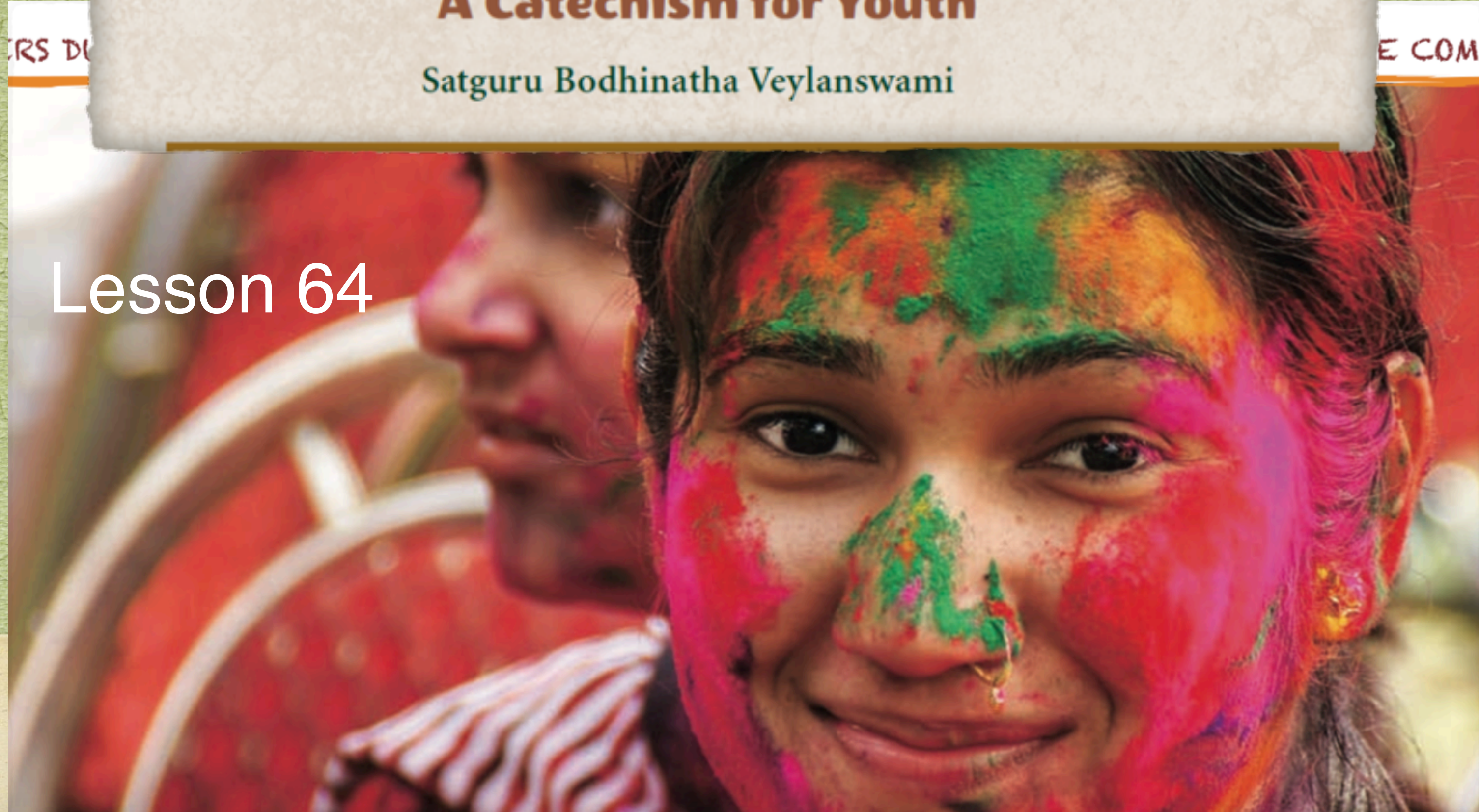
Path to Siva

A Catechism for Youth

Satguru Bodhinatha Veylanswami

Lesson 64

How Do We Celebrate Festivals?



Hindu festivals



Hinduism is celebratory by nature. Hindus miss no opportunity to set mundane matters aside and join with family, friends, neighbors and strangers alike to feast and have fun, to renew the home and the heart and, most importantly, draw nearer to God.

Festivals are times of profound mysticism

Festivals are perhaps more impressive and varied in Hinduism than in any other religion.

The devout Hindu knows these are times of profound mysticism, when God and the Gods touch our world, revitalize our souls, lighten karmas and bless our families.



Festivals perpetuate religion

Yet, festivals do even more than this.

They are essential to the perpetuation of religion, periodically reigniting the spark of zeal and devotion in the community.



Sharing spiritual values...

They provide the spiritual public square where Hindus engage with one another to affirm shared values and enjoy life's intersections.



Preparations before the festivals...

Before each celebration, vows are taken, scriptures are studied, pilgrimages are made and fasts observed in preparation.

Such acts of intimate devotion bring the devotee closer to the Gods and keep him on the path to his inmost Self.



Collective worship

As each festival begins, solitary worship becomes a collective ritual, with millions of people taking their places in a creative choreography.



Festivals are special and unforgettable

Every festival is special and unforgettable in its own way.

Thus Hindus are reminded of their faith by the sounds, scents, colorful decorations and the wild medley of tastes laid out for the feast.



Positive effects on the mind and emotions

Mind and emotions are saturated with Hinduism as sacred mantra prayers are intoned, the spiritual teachings are recounted by saints, and the Gods are praised in melodious bhajans.



Festivals in India

Each Indian village and each global community lends a little of its unique culture to how a festival is celebrated, creating almost endless variations.



Festivals outside India

Recently, with the growing Hindu population outside of India, festivals have acquired an international dimension.

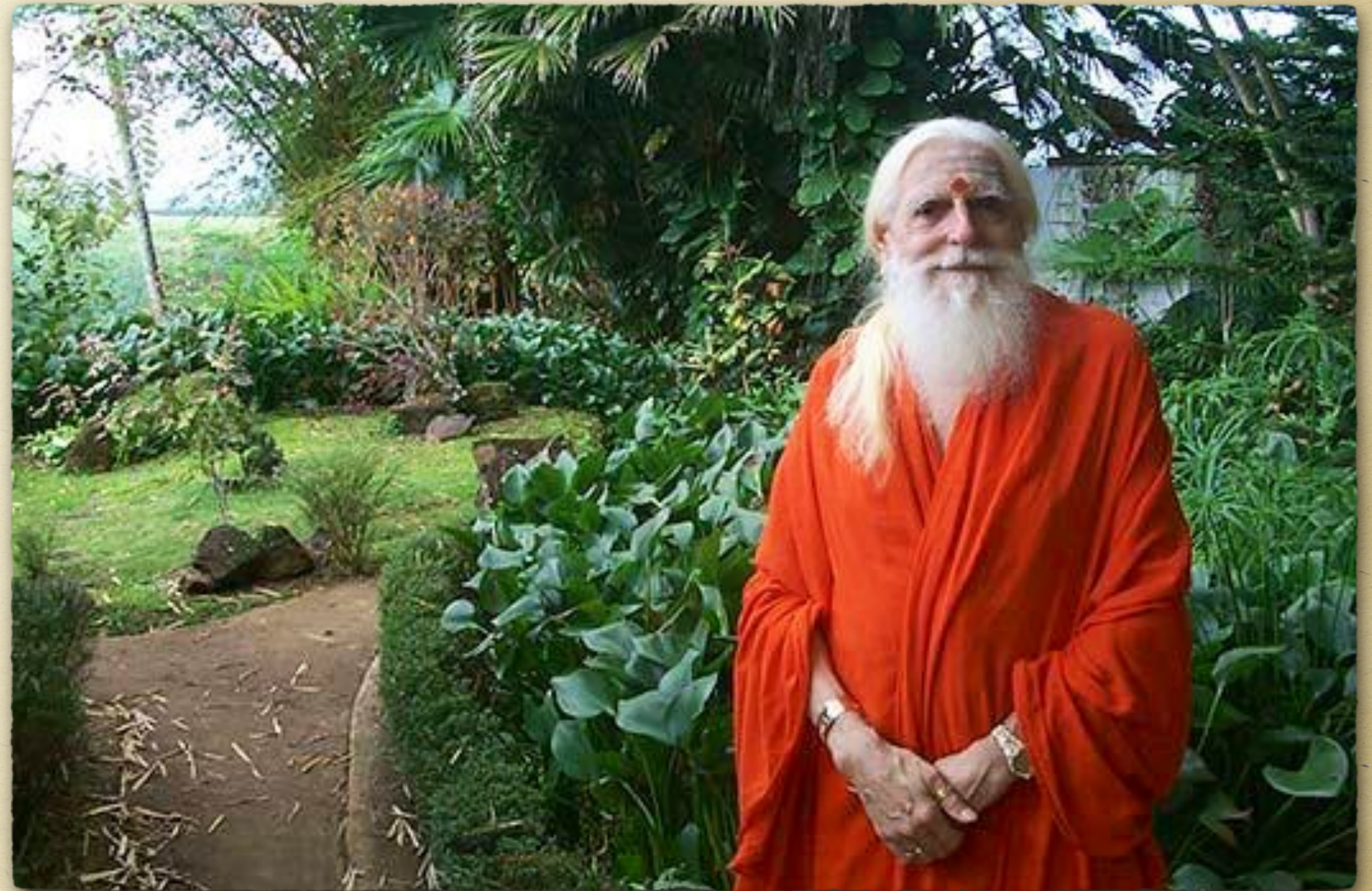
What could be more entertaining, alive, vibrant and yet pious and rich in symbolism than a Hindu festival?



Gurudeva says...

Festivals are special times of communion with God and Gods, of family and community sharing and sadhana....

We strive to attend each major festival, when the shakti of the Deity is most powerful, and pilgrimage to a far-off temple annually.



QUESTIONS for Lesson 64



64.1 The most important aspect of Hindu festivals is
(Check the correct answer)

- A. To feast and have fun
- B. To renew the home and the heart
- C. Draw nearer to God

64.2 Enter the letter from below of A - D for the phrase that correctly completes the idea. The devout Hindu knows these are times of profound mysticism when God and the Gods

- ___ Touch
- ___ Revitalize
- ___ Lighten
- ___ Bless

(A) Our world (B) Our families (C) Our souls (D) Karmas

64.3 Before each celebration
(Check the incorrect answer)

- A. Vows are taken
- B. Scriptures are studied
- C. Pilgrimages are made
- D. Feasting is observed

64.4 Hindu festivals are times when solitary worship
(Check the correct answer)

- A. Is observed throughout
- B. Becomes a collective ritual, with millions of people taking their places in a creative choreography

64.5 Enter the letter from below of A - C for the phrase that correctly completes the idea. During festivals, mind and emotions are saturated with Hinduism

- ___ As sacred mantra prayers
- ___ Spiritual teachings
- ___ The Gods are praised

(A) In melodious bhajans
(B) Are intoned
(C) Are recounted by saints