

Path to Siva

A Catechism for Youth

Satguru Bodhinatha Veylanswami

Lesson 31



What Is Karma?

Karma at work...



God Siva creates the cosmos and He resides within it.

His many special laws or systems are at work within our complex universe.

What is the law Of karma

The law that causes an object to fall to the Earth we call gravity.

The law that governs the reaction of thoughts, words and deeds we call karma.

It is an automatic system of divine justice.

By this law, what we sow, we will reap. Actions and the fruit of action are both called karma.

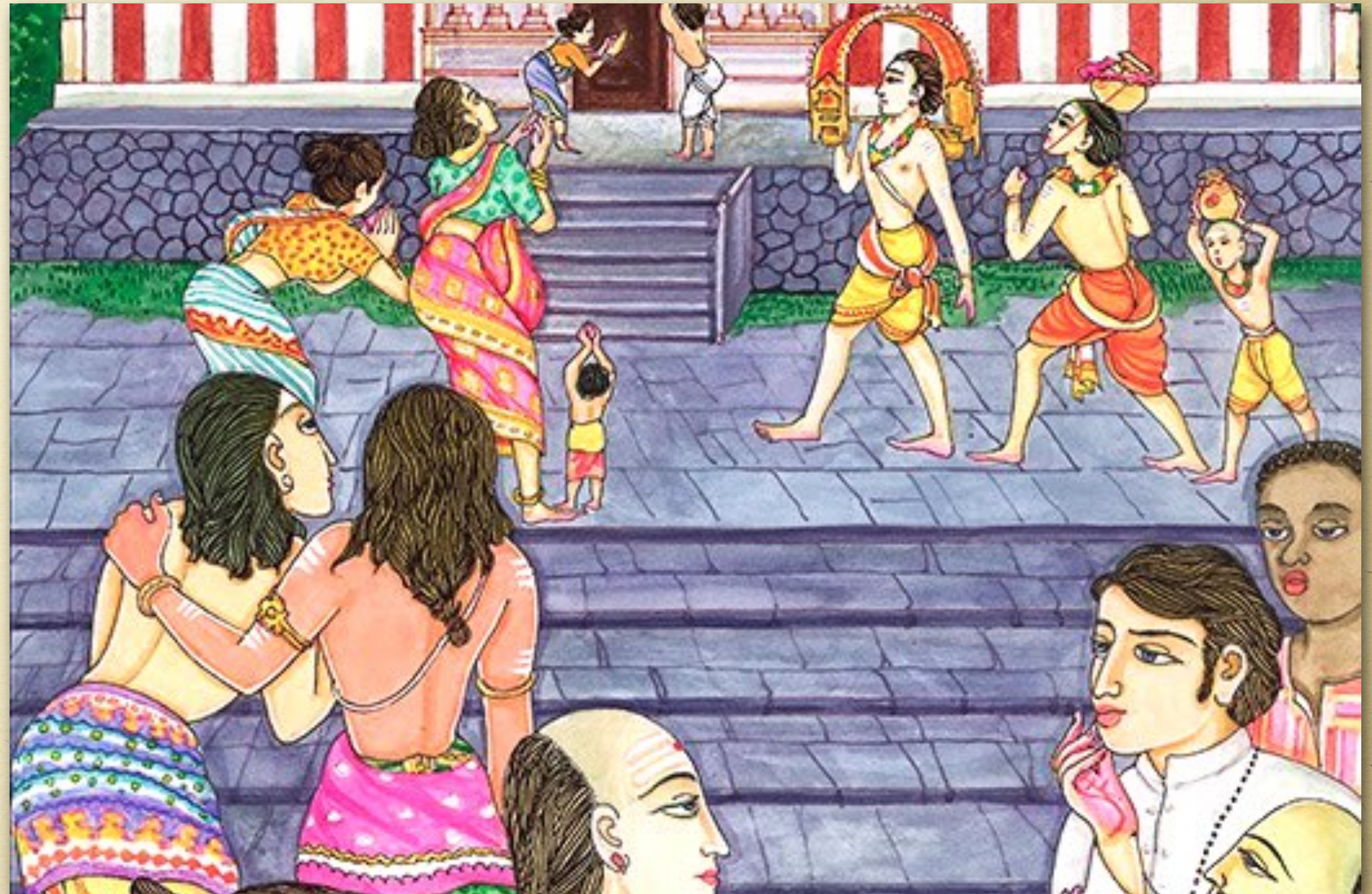


Three kinds of karma

The karma of all deeds done in our past lives

The karmas we bring into this birth to experience;

The karmas we are making by our actions now.



Good karma

Good, helpful thoughts, words and deeds bring good karma to us in the future.

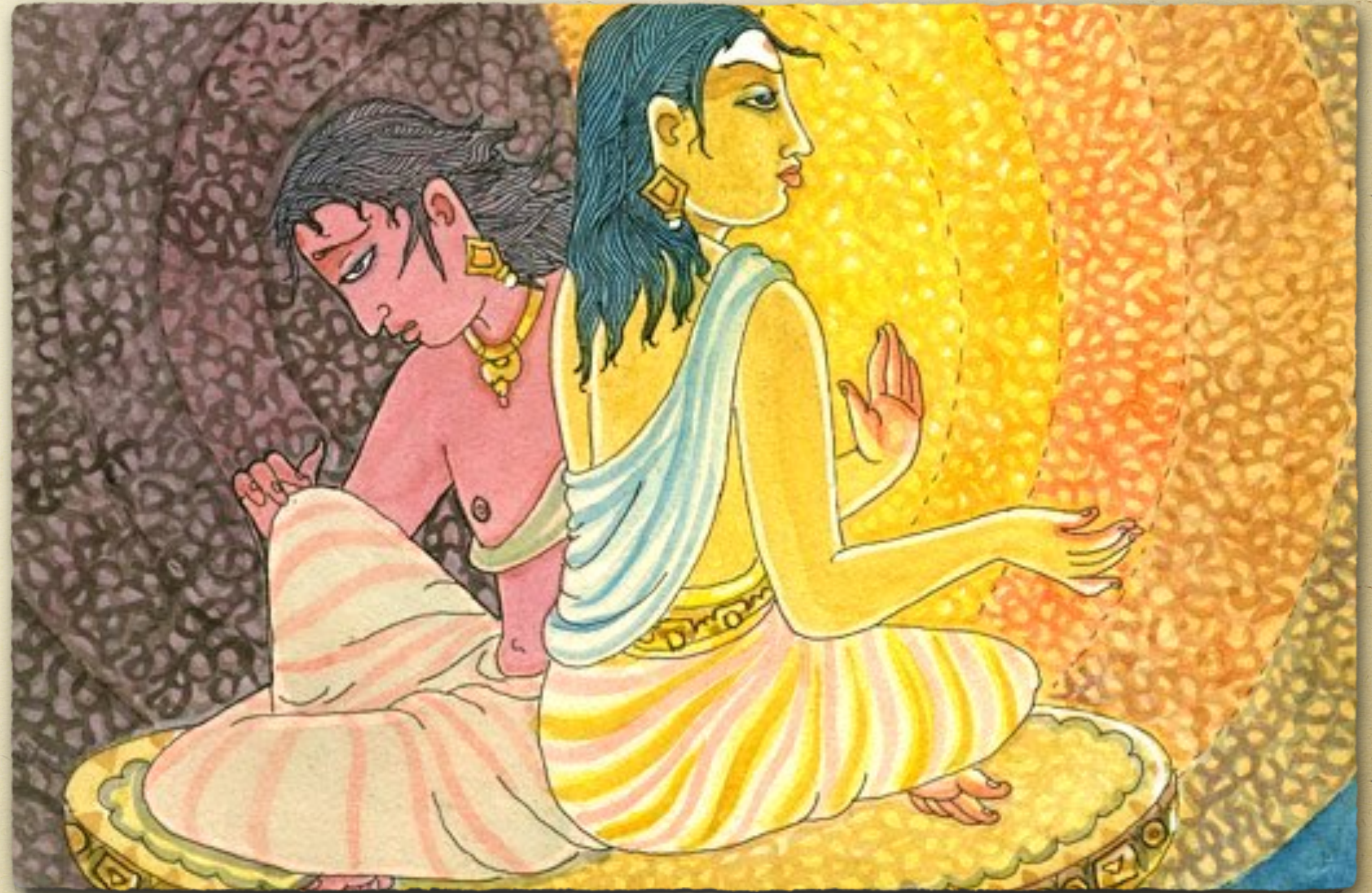


Painful karma

Hurtful actions bring back to us painful karma.

Doing bad is like planting poison ivy.

Doing good is like planting delicious mangos.



Understanding the law of karma

Understanding the law of karma gives us the power to act wisely and create a positive future.

Gurudeva said, "You are the writer of your own destiny, the master of your ship through life."

He meant that karma is not fate. It can be overcome.



Karma is our teacher

Through understanding the effect of their actions, individuals sooner or later learn to refrain from committing misdeeds.

This is what we mean by saying, “Karma is our teacher.”

It teaches us to refine our behavior.



Difficult karma helps us grow.

Even difficult karma helps us grow, by teaching us the painful results of unwise actions.

No matter how well we understand karma, facing it bravely is still a challenge.

Our ego gets in the way.

Our emotions are stirred and we react without thinking.



How to soften the effects of karma?

Such weakness can be overcome by perfecting our character according to the yamas and niyamas.

The effects of karma can be softened in several ways: by accepting and not reacting, by doing penance, by performing good deeds that balance the not-so-good we have done and by seeking the grace of God and guru.



Group karma

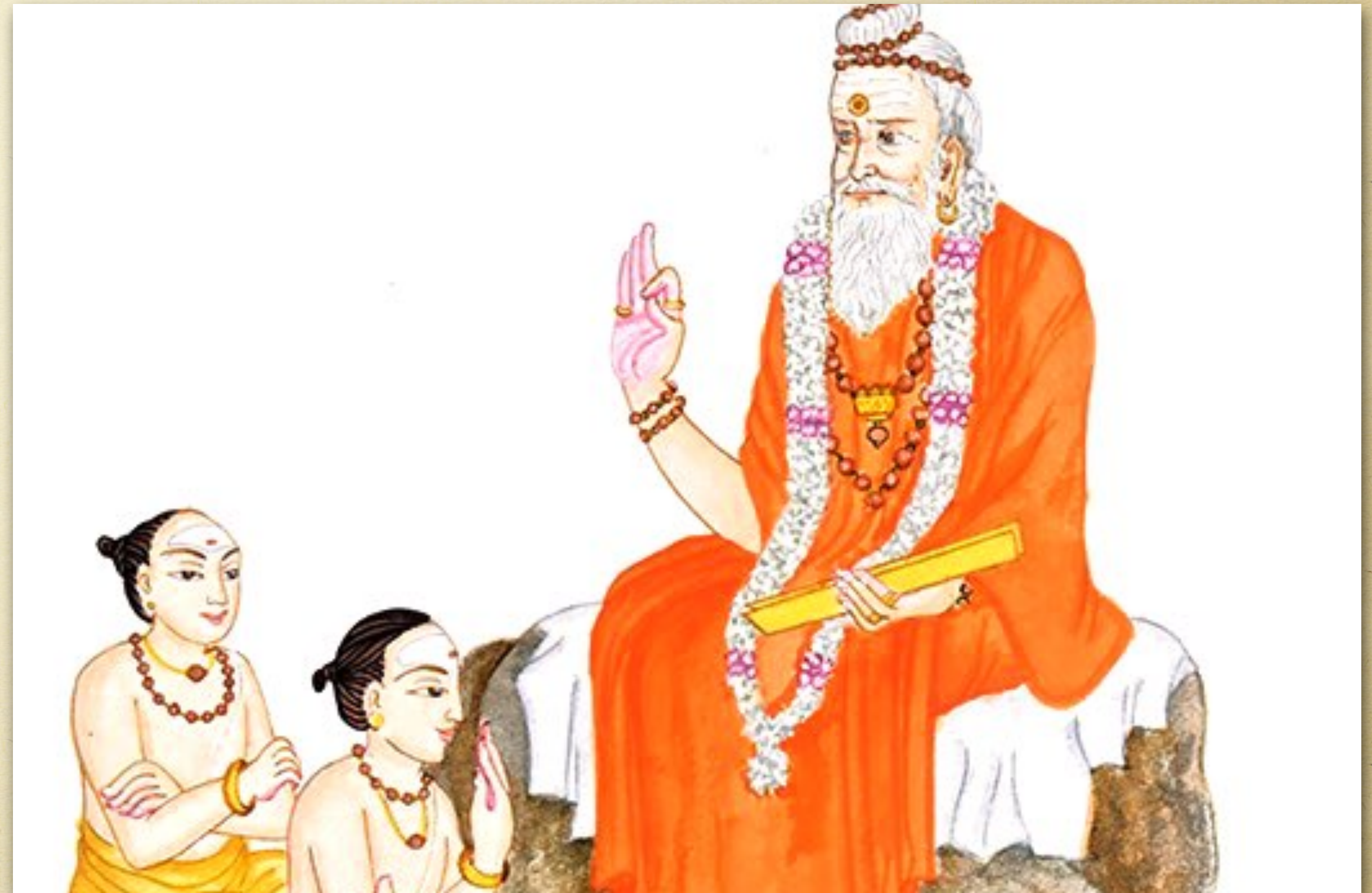
Karma applies not only to individuals but to groups, communities and nations.



Gurudeva says...

Siva's devotees accept all experiences, however difficult, as their self-created karma, without cringing or complaining.

Theirs is the power of surrender, accepting what is as it is and dealing with it courageously.



QUESTIONS for Lesson 31



31.1 The law of karma

(Check the incorrect answer)

- A. Governs the reactions of thoughts, words and deeds
- B. Causes an object to fall to the Earth
- C. Is an automatic system of divine justice

31.2 There are three types of karma.

(Check the incorrect answer)

- A. The karma of all deeds done in our past lives
- B. The karmas we bring into this birth to experience
- C. The karmas we are making by our misdeeds now

31.3 Enter the letter from below of A - D that completes the description

- ___ Good, helpful thoughts, words and deeds
- ___ Hurtful actions bring back to us
- ___ Doing bad is like planting
- ___ Doing good is like planting

- (A) Poison ivy
- (B) Painful karma
- (C) Bring good karma to us in the future
- (D) Delicious mangos

31.4 Through understanding the effect of their actions, individuals sooner or later learn to refrain from committing misdeeds. This is what we mean by saying, (Check the correct answer)

- A. Karma is fate
- B. Karma is our teacher
- C. Karma cannot be overcome

31.5 The only way that karma can be softened is by the grace of God and guru.

- True
- False