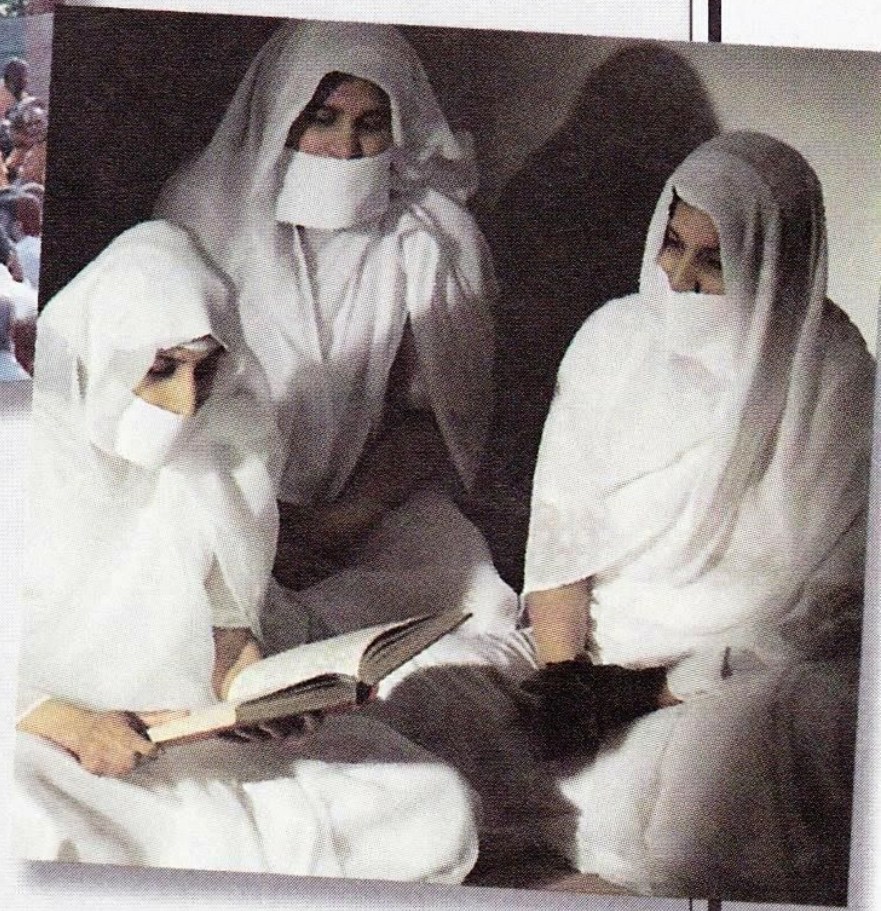


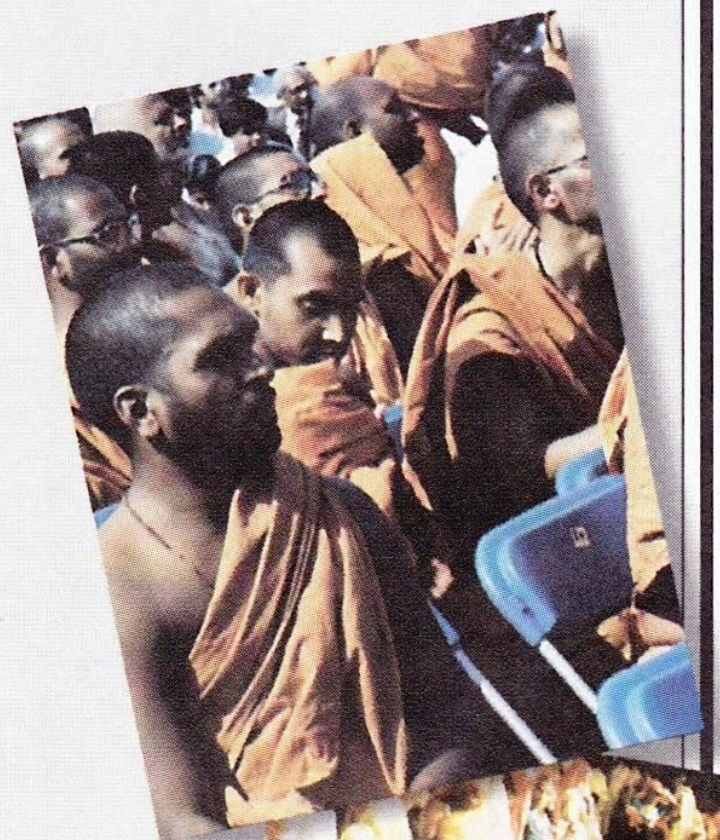


*Why Should We
Worship God
in Love and Truth?*



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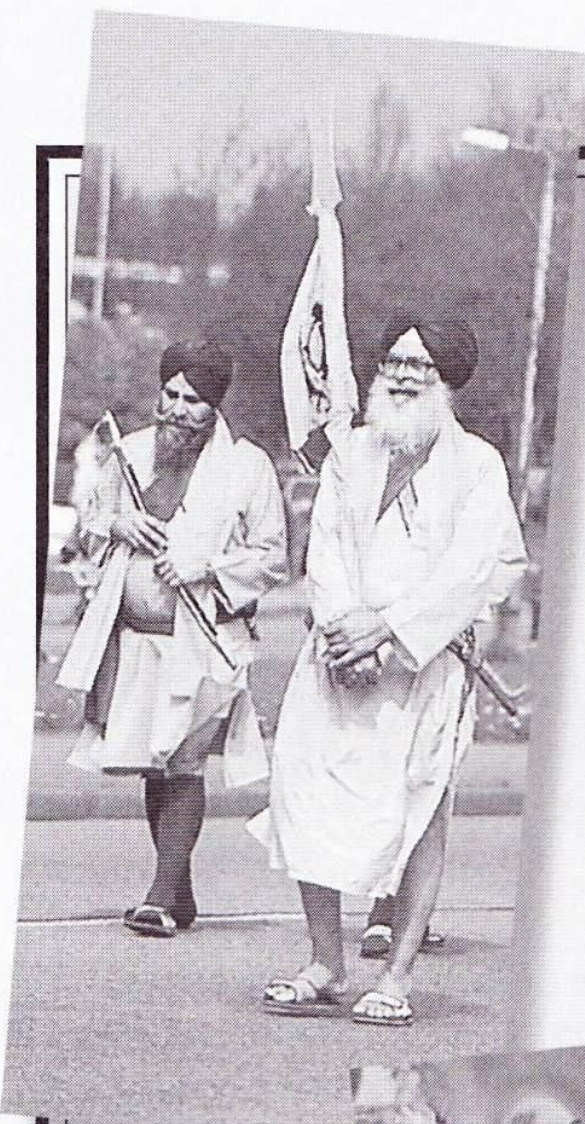
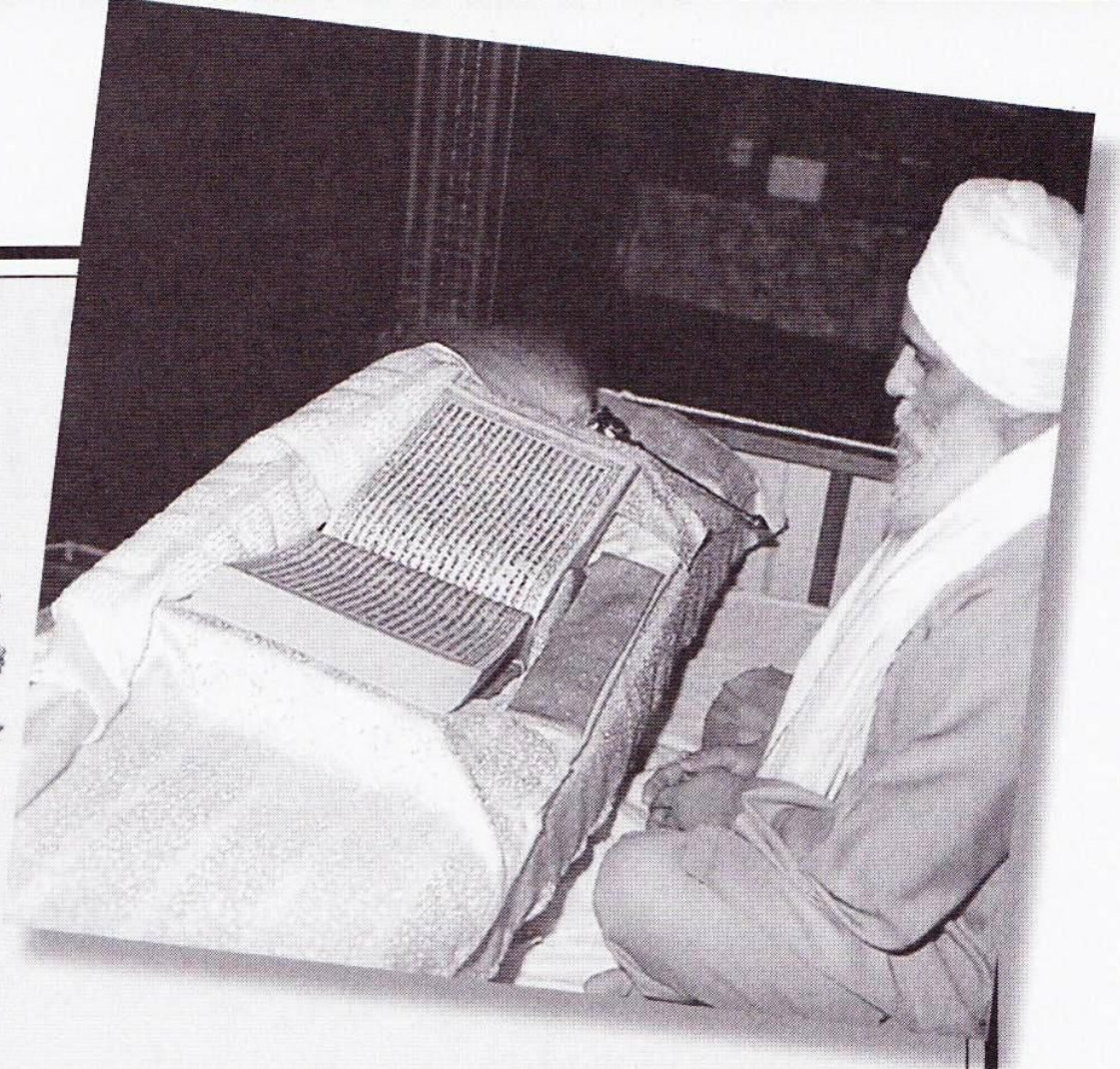
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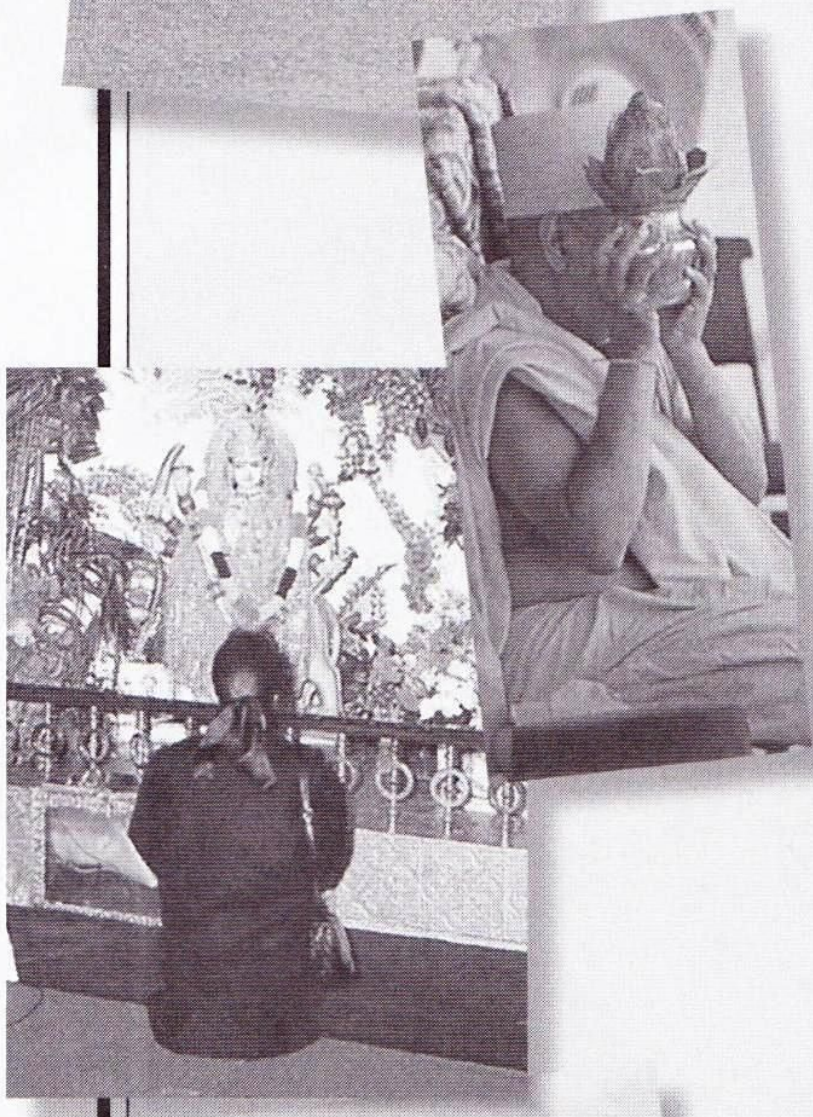
INTRODUCTION

A *Blessing From God!*—this is the fervent desire of millions of Hindus, Jains, and Sikhs. They perform daily acts of devotion and worship to obtain that blessing. Do you share their heartfelt yearning?

² Indian sages have long taught the importance of such divine blessings. In the *Brahma Purana*, for example, they asked: “Which deity shall a devotee desiring liberation worship . . . ? Wherefrom is the supreme welfare gained? . . . Who is the god of gods?”¹ Guru Nanak later similarly inquired: “How shall *man* become true before God?”² Obviously, if we can answer these questions, we may expect rich blessings from God for ourselves and our families.

³ The *Bhagavad Gita* tells us that the one thing God asks of us is simply an offering of our love. “[The] highest *Person* is to be won by love-and-worship directed to none other,” it says.³ The Sikh *Granth Sahib* agrees: “To serve God is to love Him, if pious men reflect on it.”⁴ We can surely agree with this, but what instructions has God given us to guide us in the way of true worship?

⁴ The purpose of this brochure is to lead you to God’s own revelation of himself so that you may worship him in love and truth. It traces the search for *Sruti*, the God-inspired scriptures, and shows how you can be among the millions who now benefit from its teachings and receive blessings from God. May God guide you and your family in your search for eternal blessings and happiness, to his praise!



Loving God in Deed and Truth

“Give me your whole heart, love and adore me,” says the deity in the *Bhagavad Gita*. He calls this “the deepest of all truths” as far as the supreme religion is concerned.¹ But how can we show our love for God and our devotion to him?

² ‘Devotion implies obedience to the divine will,’ comments Swami S. Radhakrishnan, because everything else we may offer God already belongs to Him.² Guru Nanak likewise asserts that a person who ‘hears, obeys, and loves

God in his heart’ has greater merit than one who simply gives alms or practices austerity.³

³ Do you agree with these comments? Most sincere people would. But before we can obey God, we need to know what his divine will is. Where should we look to find divine truth?

Is Self a Revealer of Truth?

⁴ Some Hindu sages maintain that spiritual truth is hidden in our hearts and is revealed through Yogic meditation or

Is man capable of determining by himself how best to serve God?



Can Rituals Perfect Our Love for God?

"We must not confuse [*gauni bhakti*] with the selfsame rituals, such as repetition of God's names, hymns, prayers and worship performed by the followers of the Path of Desire. . . . They want something of the sense-world in exchange for their worship. Love cannot grow out of such bargaining."—*Hinduism at a Glance*, Swami Nirvedananda, 1979, page 94.

by the chanting of mantras. On the other hand, Swami Satprakashananda contends that meditation without previous knowledge of God "is likely to be subject to fantasy, which cannot remove ignorance and reveal the Truth."⁴

⁵ Highlighting the limitations of human reasoning, Swami Vivekenanda states: "[The] questions, whether there is an immortal soul, . . . whether there is any supreme intelligence guiding this universe or not, are beyond the field of reason. Reason can never answer these questions. . . . Yet these questions are so important to us. Without a proper answer to them, human life will be purposeless."⁵ Since we cannot answer these questions by human reasoning, where can we turn?

Sacred Scriptures

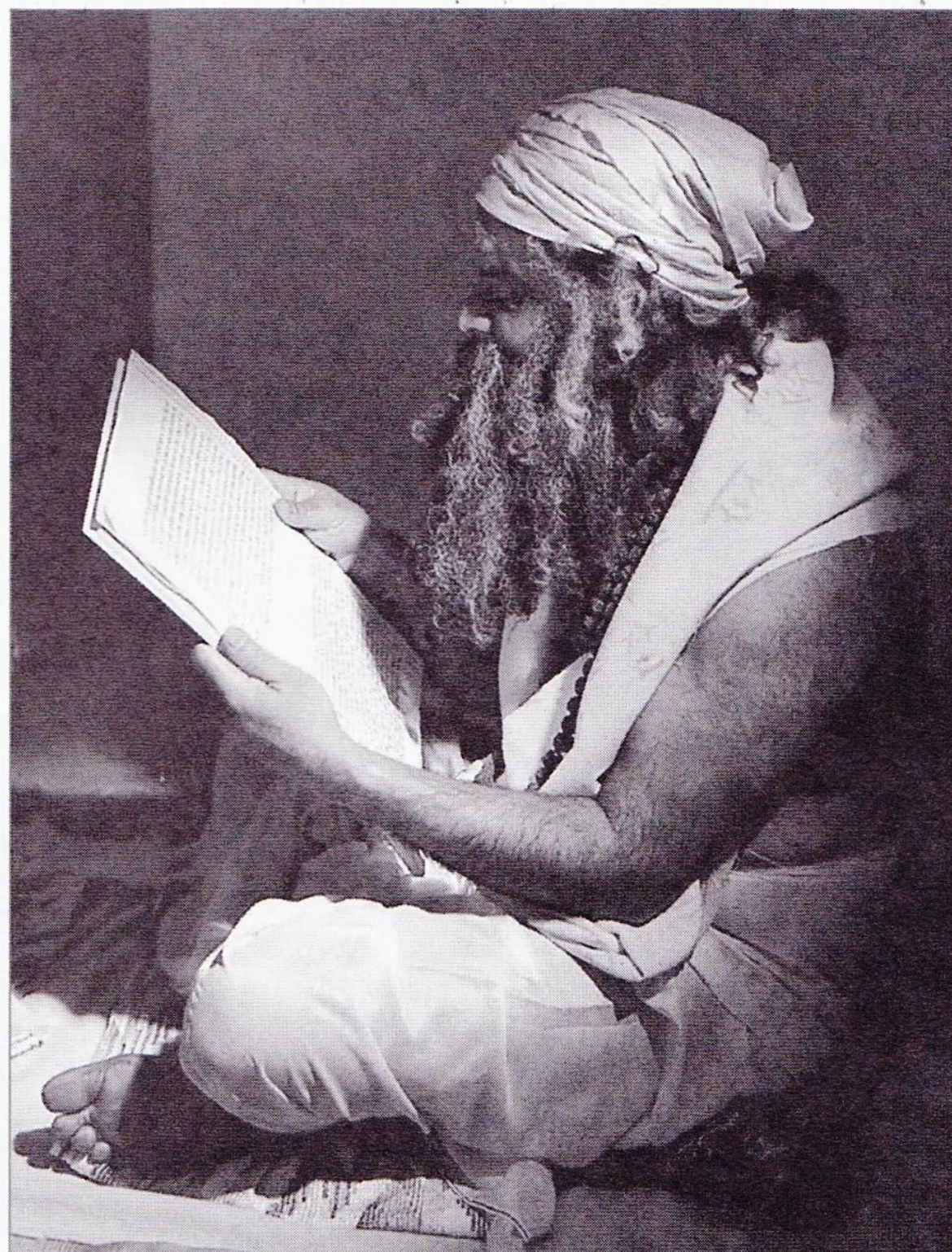
⁶ Leading Hindu sages have always said that scripture is the means by which

'The scripture is the only source of the truths regarding the suprasensible'

God reveals his truth. 'The scripture is the only source of the truths regarding the suprasensible,' says Sankaracarya.⁶ The *Gita* also declares: "Let Scripture be your norm, determining what is right and wrong. Once you know what the ordinance of Scripture bids you do, you should perform down here the works therein prescribed."⁷

⁷ As a bee that desires nectar must find a flower, so a person who loves God must search out His truth. Swami Prabhavananda says: "God is, above all, truth. The man who loves truth must therefore in the end love God; the man who does not love truth will never love God."⁸

⁸ In your search for truth, is looking just to yourself the answer? Why not look beyond yourself and examine scripture? But there are many sacred scriptures claiming to be from God. How can you identify the one that contains His truth?



How Can You Identify God's Truth?

How can we distinguish the word of God from the word of men—the true from the false? Well, in any dispute over a merchant's weights, would we not check the weights' official seals to determine the matter? Likewise, if we are to worship our Maker in love and in truth, we need to check the basic credentials of holy writings.

² As we have seen, only God can satisfy our spiritual needs, so we can expect scripture from him to *magnify God and answer our questions about him*, such as, Who is God? Why did he create us? How should we worship him? Why is there so much suffering, and will the human family ever live together in lasting happiness? These basic questions affect each one of us. How does God answer them?

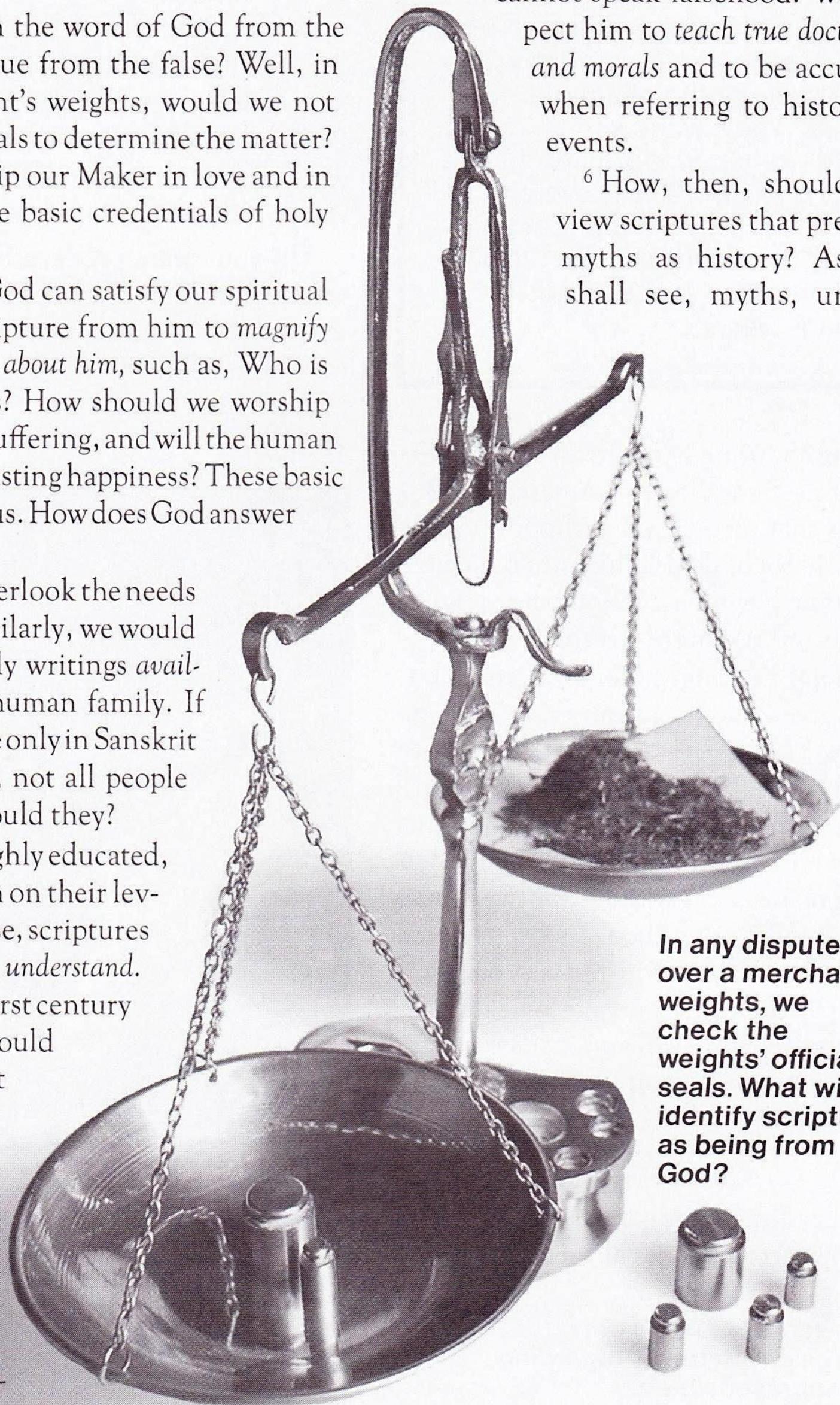
³ Loving parents never overlook the needs of any of their children. Similarly, we would expect God to make his holy writings *available to all* members of his human family. If those writings were available only in Sanskrit or Gurmukhi, for example, not all people would be able to benefit, would they?

⁴ A kind father, even if highly educated, always speaks to his children on their level of understanding. Likewise, scriptures from God must be *easy to understand*. Says Paul, a preacher of the first century of our Common Era: "I would rather speak five words that can be understood, in order to teach others, than speak thousands of words in strange tongues."—1 Corinthians 14:19, *Today's English Version*.

⁵ We resent being de-

ceived and told lies. Rather, we are drawn to people who speak the truth. Honesty conveys a feeling of trust and confidence. Since our sense of right and wrong originates with our Maker, he cannot speak falsehood. We expect him to *teach true doctrines and morals* and to be accurate when referring to historical events.

⁶ How, then, should we view scriptures that present myths as history? As we shall see, myths, unlike



In any dispute over a merchant's weights, we check the weights' official seals. What will identify scriptures as being from God?

Questions for Examination

As you read through this brochure, check to see how the religious writings measure up to all or any of these seven basic criteria:

They should:

1. **Magnify God and answer our questions about him**
2. **Be available to all**
3. **Be easy to understand**
4. **Teach true doctrines and morals**
5. **Be free from myths**
6. **Be free from demonism**
7. **Provide solutions for our problems and have a good effect on our lives**

truth, differ widely and sometimes portray God as being weak or immoral. God's word has to be *free from myths*.

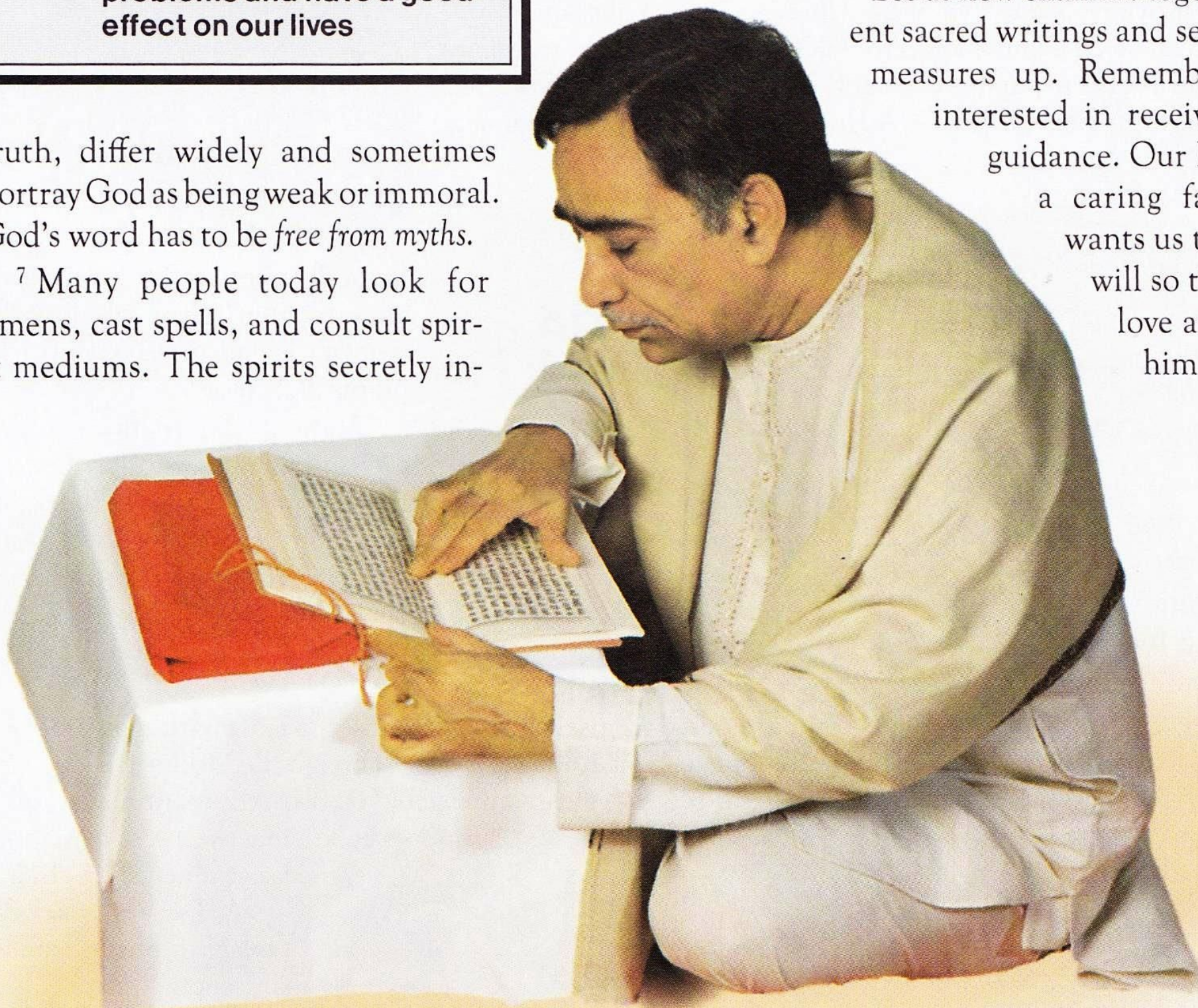
⁷ Many people today look for omens, cast spells, and consult spirit mediums. The spirits secretly in-

voked by such practices often harm innocent victims, including children. Since God is not evil, can scriptures having connections with such forms of demonism originate with him? All revelations of the true God will be *free from demonism*.

⁸ We can also tell whether scripture is from God or from men by observing the fruits it produces in the lives of those who follow its teachings. Are they clean, honest, and hardworking, or are they deceitful, dishonest, and corrupt? Do they enjoy warm, loving family relationships, or do they accept the mistreatment of women and other people as normal? Are they people who know God personally, as a friend, or are they guided solely by religious leaders? A book of divine origin should *provide solutions for our problems and have a good effect on our lives*.

⁹ These seven requirements, taken together, provide the standard by which to test all holy writings. When a book meets all of them, surely it comes from God!

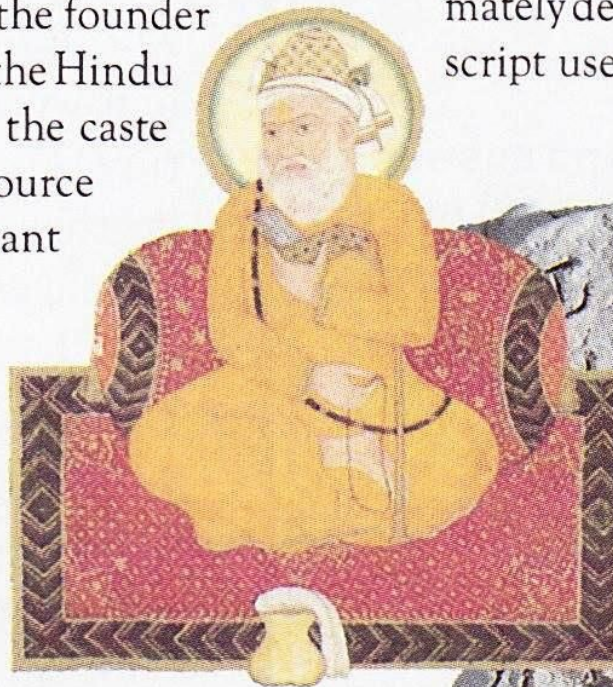
¹⁰ Let us now examine together different sacred writings and see how each measures up. Remember, we are interested in receiving divine guidance. Our Maker, like a caring father, also wants us to know his will so that we may love and worship him.



Sacred Writings of India

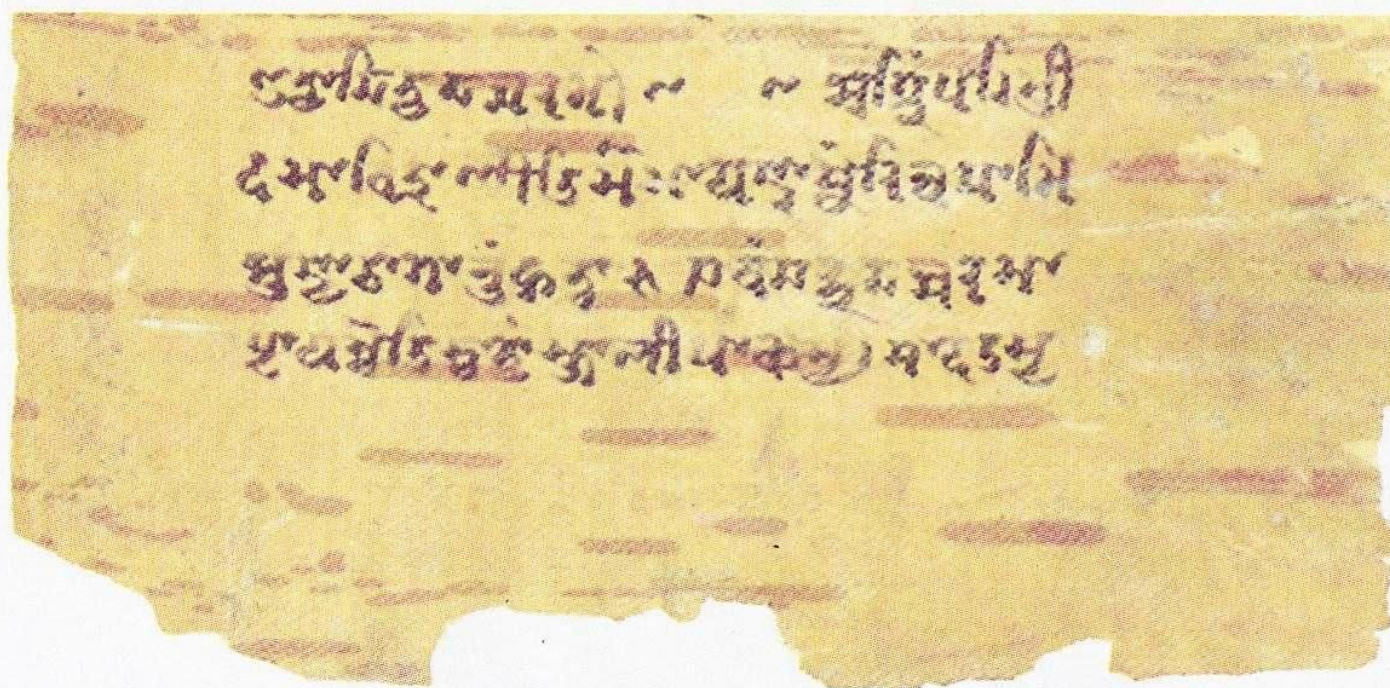
GURU NANAK AND THE GURU GRANTH SAHIB

According to the *Guru Granth Sahib*, Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism, never fully acknowledged the authority of the Hindu scriptures because he objected to Vedic ceremonies, the caste system, and the worship of many gods. Tracing the source of Nanak's beliefs, however, Sikh writer Khushwant Singh notes: "Even a casual reading of his hymns reveals the influence of the *Rigveda*, the *Upanishads* . . . , and the *Bhagavad Gita*." So to understand the *Guru Granth Sahib*, we must examine the sources of its teachings—the Vedas, the Upanishads, and the *Bhagavad Gita*.—*The Sikh Gurus and the Sikh Religion*, Anil Chandra Banerjee, 1983, pages 133-4.



THE VEDAS

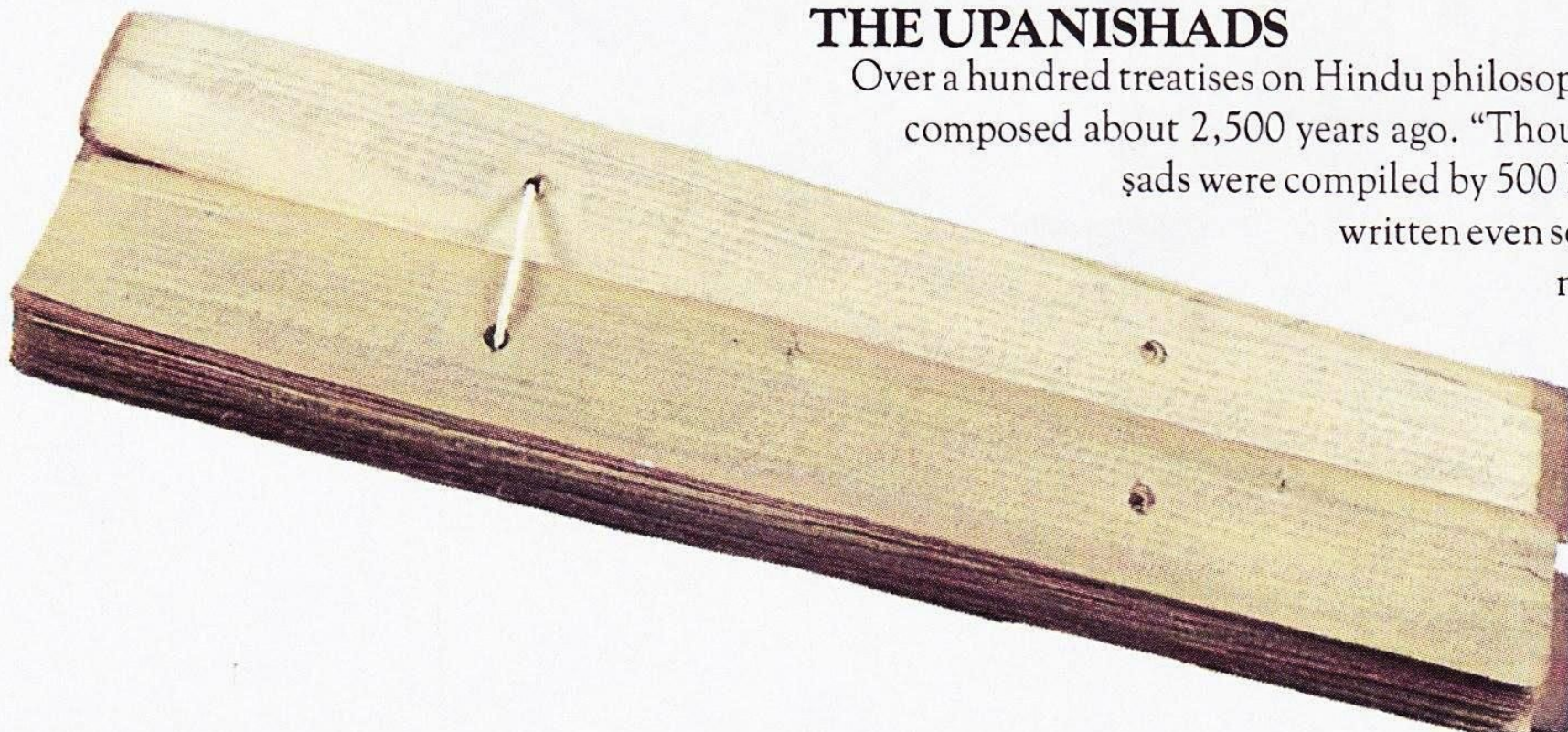
The earliest hymns of the four Vedas (*Rig-Veda*, *Yajur-Veda*, *Sama-Veda*, and *Atharva-Veda*) were composed nearly 3,000 years ago and were transmitted orally from teacher to pupil. "It was only in the fourteenth century A.D. that the Veda was written down."—*A History of India*, P. K. Saratkumar, 1978, page 24.



THE UPANISHADS

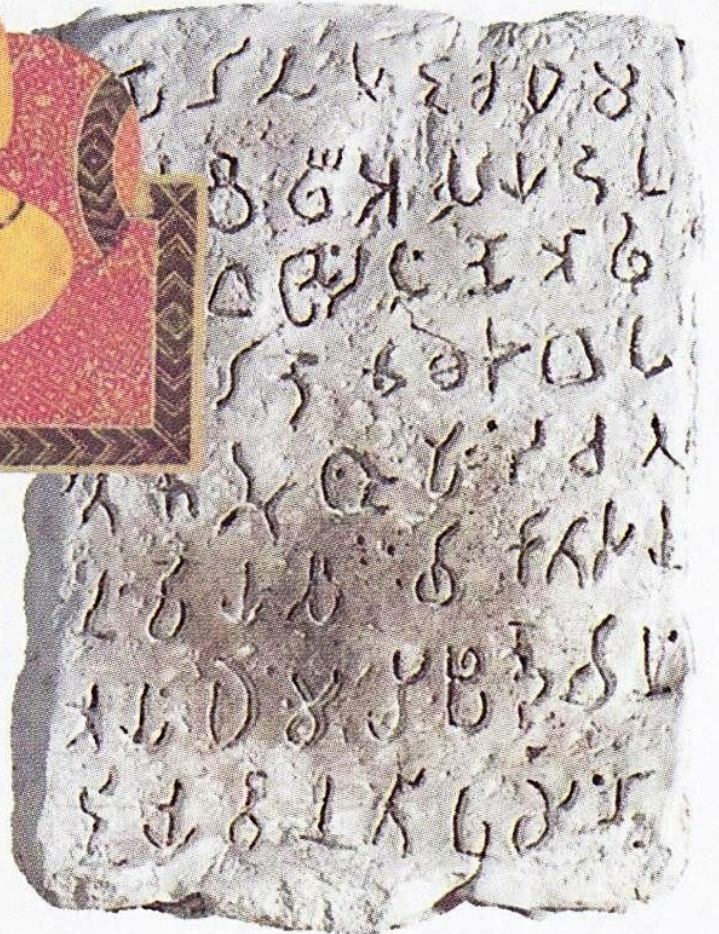
Over a hundred treatises on Hindu philosophy and mysticism were composed about 2,500 years ago. "Though the earliest Upanishads were compiled by 500 B.C., they continued to be written even so late as the spread of Mahomedan influence in India."

—*A History of Indian Philosophy*, Surendranath Dasgupta, Indian edition 1975, Volume 1, page 39.



BRAHMI —INDIA'S ROOT SCRIPT

The scripts of Indian languages, such as Sanskrit, Hindi, Punjabi, Marathi, Malayalam, Tamil, and Bengali, have all "ultimately descended from Brahmi, the script used by the Emperor Ashoka



in the 3rd century B.C. in the earliest surviving Indian inscriptions."—*Indian Manuscripts*, The British Library, 1977, page 1.

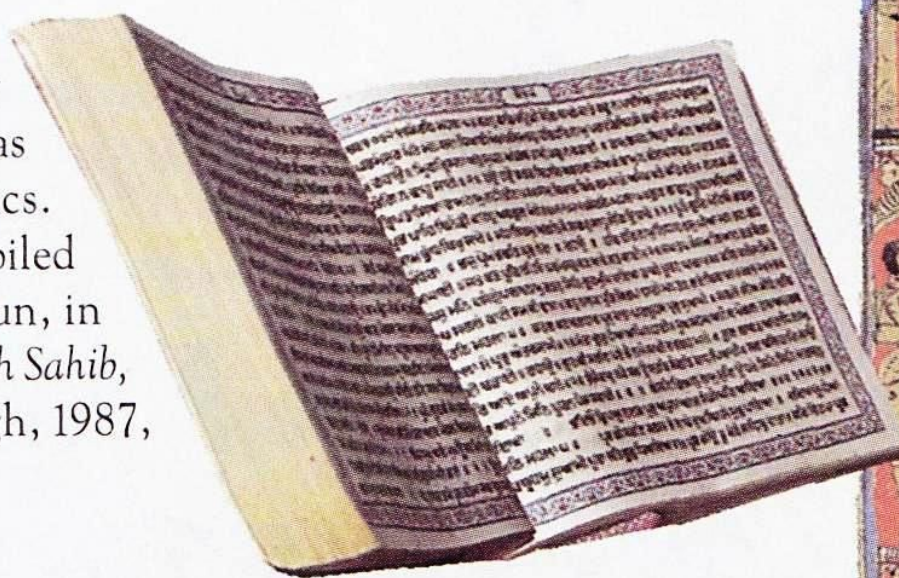
"Brāhmī, the traditional prototype of all Indo-Āryan scripts, may have been introduced in the eighth or seventh century B.C."—*A Dictionary of Hinduism*, Margaret and James Stutley, 1977, page 267.





THE GURU GRANTH SAHIB

A collection of almost 6,000 hymns composed by various Sikh gurus as well as Hindu and Muslim mystics. "The Guru-Granth was compiled by the fifth Sikh Guru, Arjun, in 1604 A.D."—*Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, translated by Dr. Gopal Singh, 1987, Volume 1, page XVIII.



THE EPICS

Ramayana relates the story of Rama, a prince who later ruled from the capital Ajodhya in northern India, and became deified as the seventh avatar of Vishnu.

Mahabharata describes the conflict between two families for the rule of upper India nearly 3,000 years ago.

"Both the *Rāmāyaṇa* of Vālmiki and the *Mahābhārata* of Vyāsa must have been completed between 500 B.C. and A.D. 200, the former in the first half of this period and the latter in the second half."—*Advanced History of India*, K. A. Nilakanta Sastri and G. Srinivasachari, 1982, page 59.

THE AGAMAS

Jain scriptures compiled in Sanskrit and Prakrit on the life and teachings of Mahavira, who lived over 2,400 years ago. "The Śvetāmbara canon of scripture, which was not given definitive form until nearly A.D. 500, consists of approximately forty-five texts, in six groups."—*Abingdon Dictionary of Living Religions*, edited by Keith Crim, 1981, page 371.

THE PURANAS

A class of Sanskrit writings of ancient tales and Hindu mythology. "None of the eighteen main *Puranas* are earlier than the Gupta Period (AD 320-480), although much of the legendary material is older."—*Hinduism*, M. Stutley, 1985, page 37.

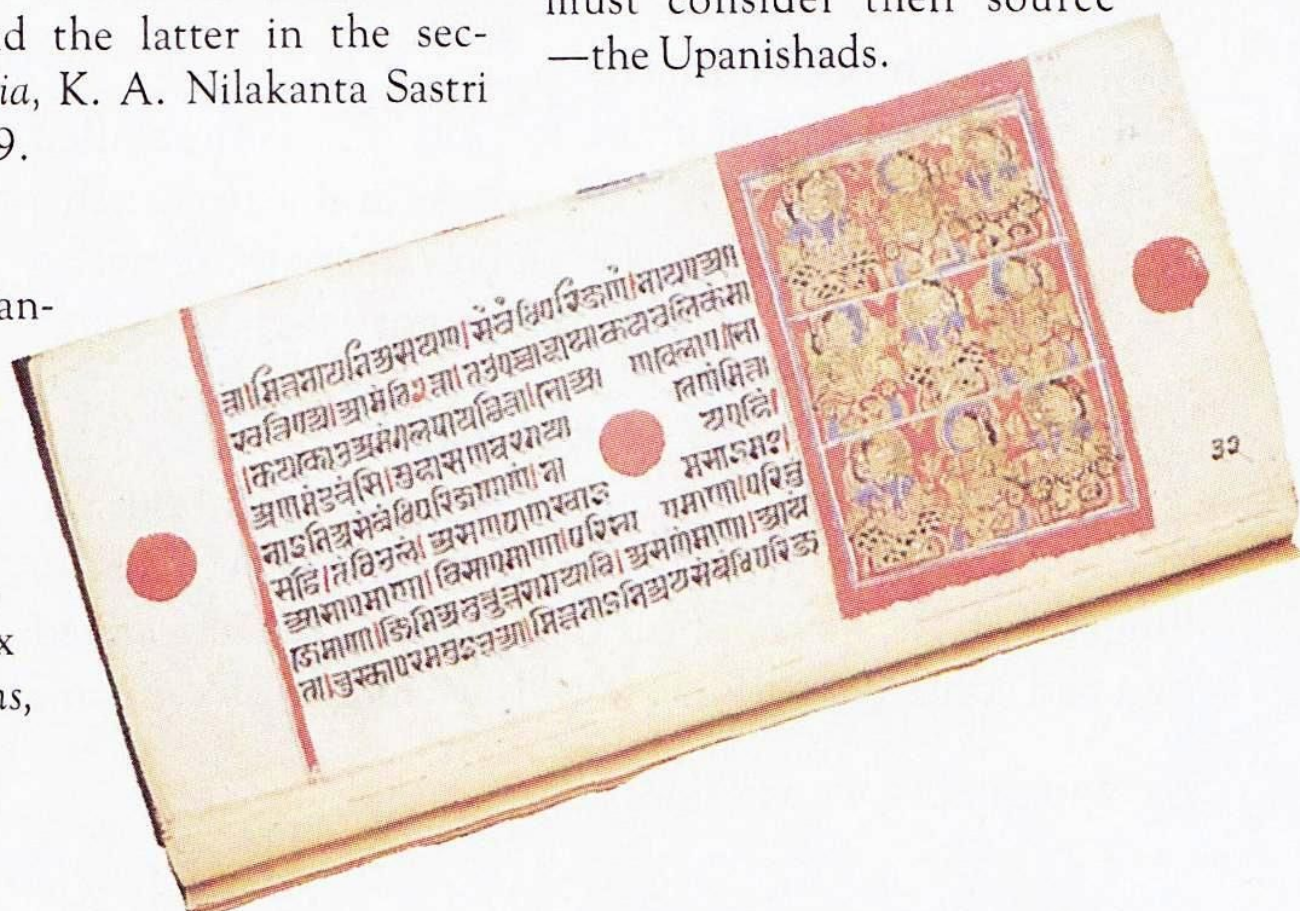
MAHAVIRA AND THE AGAMAS

The teachings embodied in the Jain scriptures, collectively called *agamas*, are attributed in part to Mahavira and his disciples. What was the source of their teaching?

"The philosophy of Jainism draws its inspiration mainly from the atheistic Sankhya system," notes *Epics, Myths and Legends of India* (P. Thomas, 1980, page 132). The Sankhya



(also Samkhya) philosophy, in turn, is based on the Upanishads and teaches that liberation from suffering and rebirth is possible through right conduct and ascetic practices. So to understand Jain beliefs, we must consider their source—the Upanishads.



The Vedas—The Search for Truth

Of all the Hindu scriptures, the Vedas are the oldest and the most important. To this day, they are the main source of Hindu ceremonies performed at birth, marriage, and death. Their hymns reveal how worshipers seek God's blessing and prosperity in everyday life.

² Orthodox Hindus believe the Vedas to be Sruti, revealed by God, and therefore free from error and imperfection. On the other hand, Buddha, revered by many as the ninth incarnation of Vishnu, rejected their authority, describing them as a 'pathless jungle.' Between these opposing views, there exist a variety of other beliefs.

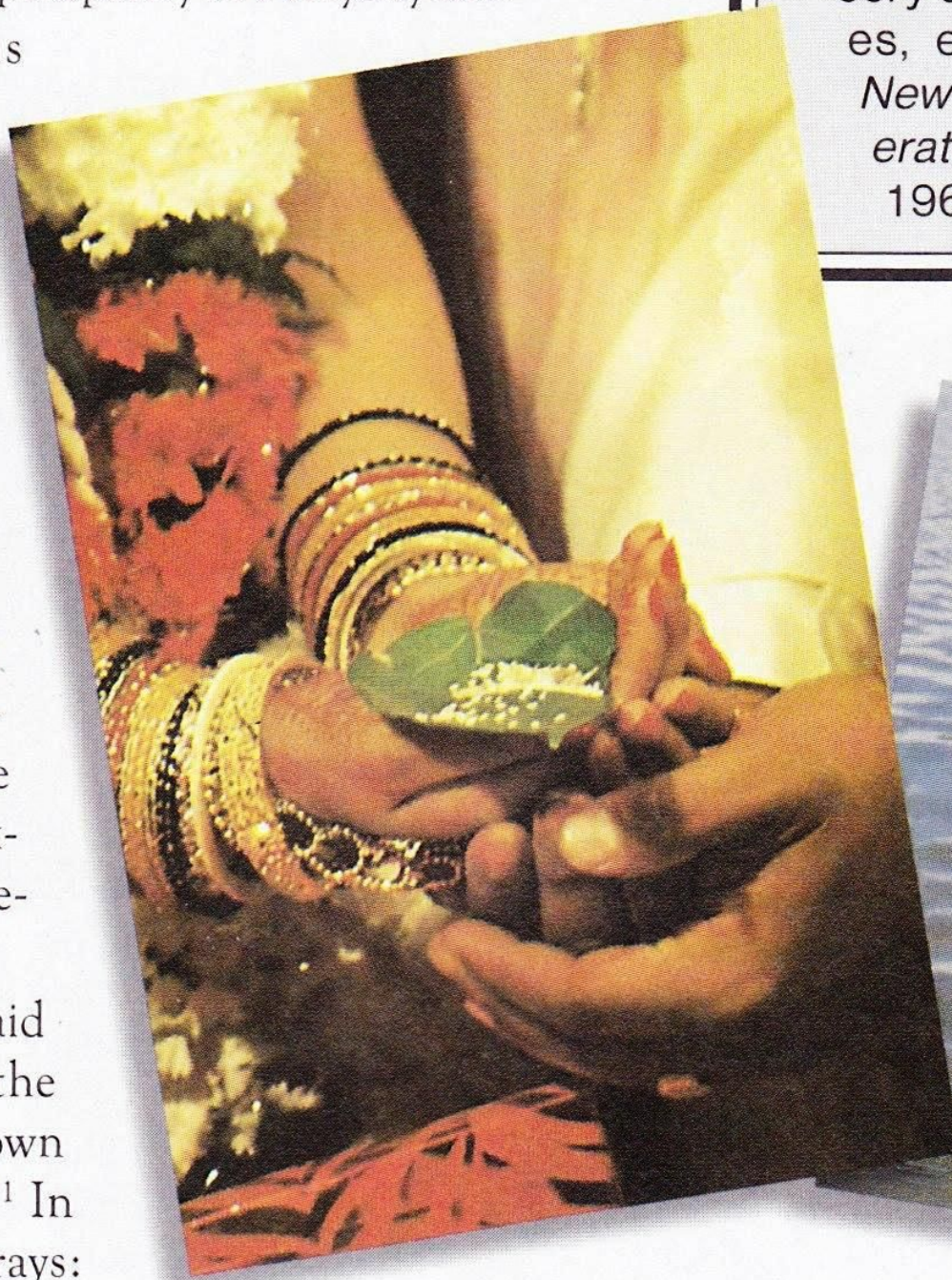
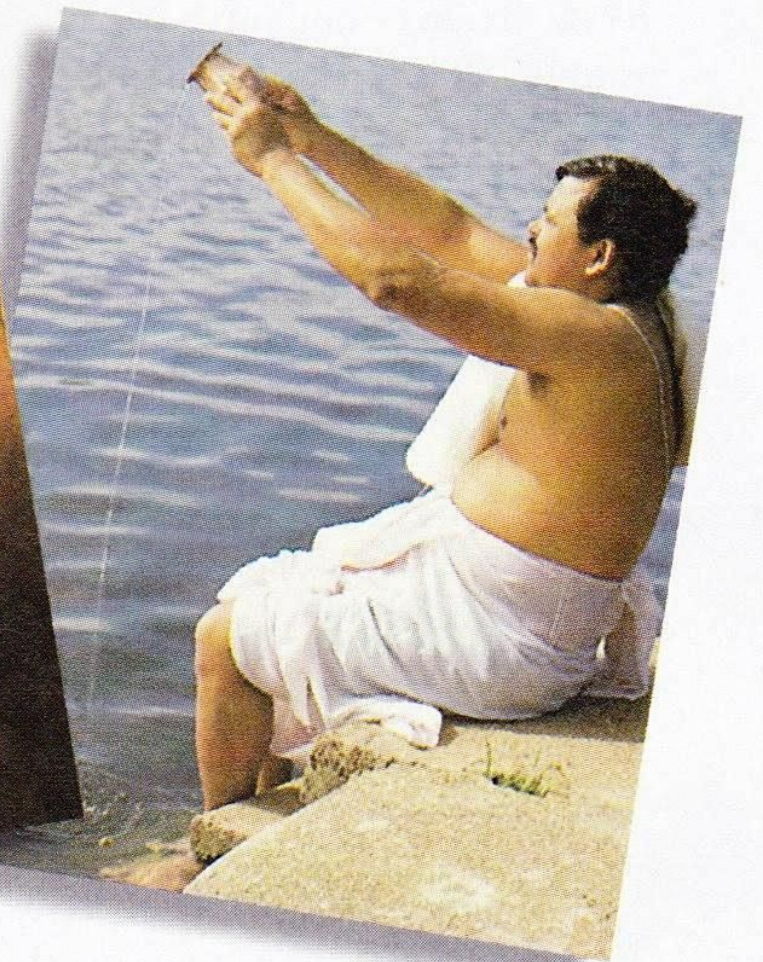
³ The rishis (seers) said that they composed the Vedic hymns with their own 'ability and knowledge.'¹ In a hymn to Agni, a rishi prays: "Inspired with poetry I have fashioned this hymn of praise for you . . . , as the skilled artist fashions a chariot."² Like poets and artists, rishis were moved from within themselves to compose over a thousand Vedic hymns. How important are these?

Vedic Moral Code

⁴ Guided by their consciences, the rishis point out the badness of immorality. They advise the gambler: "Play no longer with the dice, but till your field."³ When troubled by a bad conscience, they pray: "If we humans have com-

The Vedas —Did You Know?

"The Atharva Veda . . . was not originally recognised as having the canonical status of the other three Vedas. It grew up when the Adhvaryu priest began to cater to the masses and produce spells of magic and sorcery directed against diseases, enemies, demons."—*A New History of Sanskrit Literature*, Krishna Chaitanya, 1962, page 33.



Hindu rituals, such as those performed at birth, marriage, and death (see next page), are based on the Vedas

mitted some offence against the race of gods, O Varuṇa, or through carelessness have violated your laws, do not injure us, O god, for that sin."⁴

⁵ Some of the rishis' hymns draw upon our qualities of love and kindness. For

example, family members are exhorted to be “attached to one another like the newly born calf to the cow. . . . Let the wife to the husband speak words full of honey, ever auspicious. Let not brother hate brother, nor sister sister.”⁵

Rishis Search for Truth

⁶ The Vedas reveal the rishis’ remarkable thirst for truth. They also reveal the limits of their understanding. To discover life’s meaning, they wonder about the origin of the universe: “What was the wood and

the sky, from his feet the earth.”⁷ From him also came the different castes and animals.

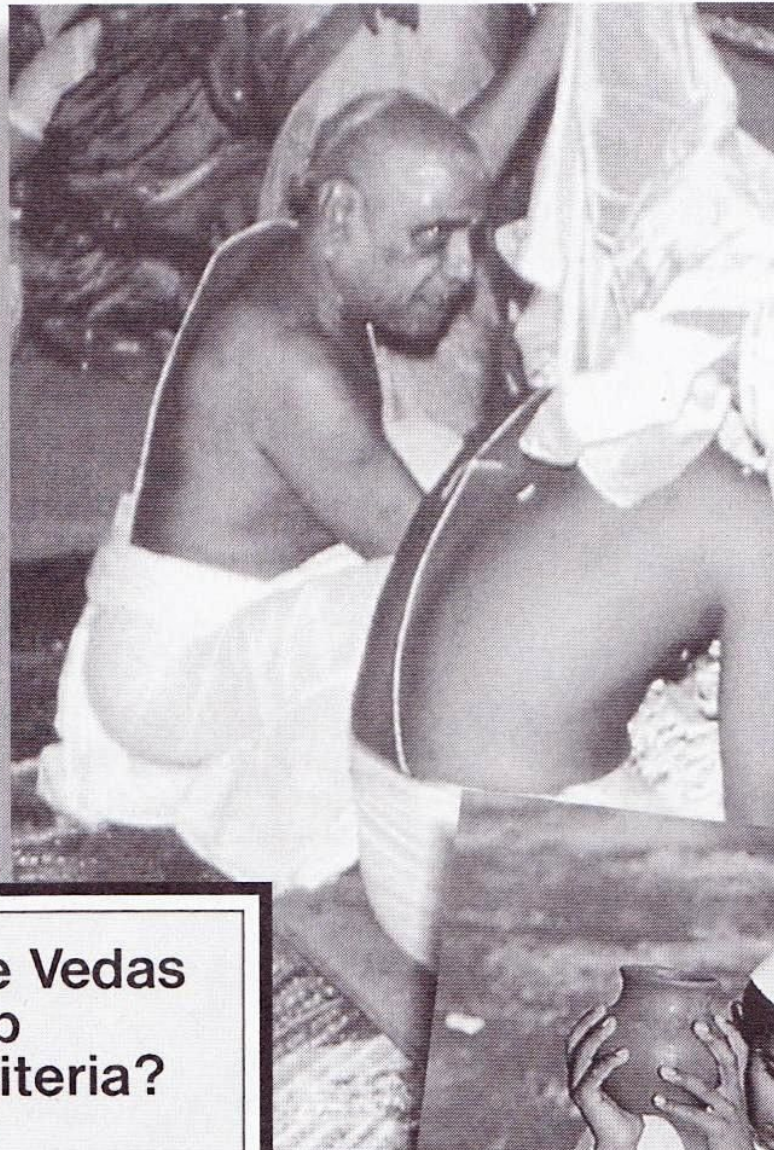
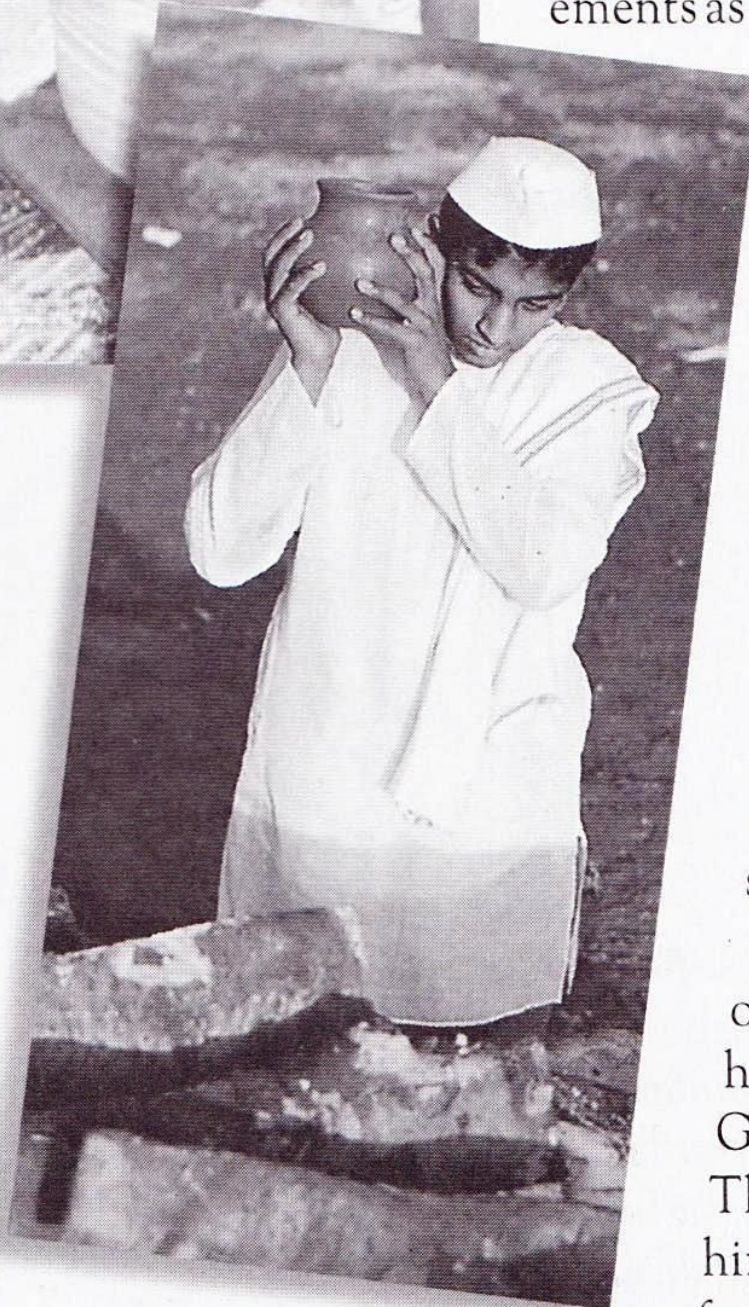
⁸ Such explanations, however, did not fully satisfy those rishis who desired to know the truth. Therefore, as they conclude the Vedas, they still wonder: “Who knows the truth? Who can tell whence and how arose this universe? The [Vedic] gods are later than its beginning: who knows therefore whence comes this creation? Only that god who sees in highest heaven: he only knows whence came this universe, and whether it was made or uncreated. He only knows, or perhaps he knows not.”⁸

⁹ The rishis addressed their hymns to such deified natural elements as the sun, sky, wind, and

fire. But they did not view any one of these as the supreme deity. Consequently, in the last book of the *Rig-Veda*, they ask: “What God shall we adore with our oblation?”⁹ In other words, which of the 33 gods of the Vedas is the Creator whom we should worship in love and truth?

¹⁰ At the completion of the Vedas, the rishis had not found the true God so as to worship him. They were still seeking him. The Vedas, therefore, are not a revelation

of God’s truth but are a record of the rishis’ earnest search for it. The quest is now taken up in the Upanishads, the next great body of scriptures of India.



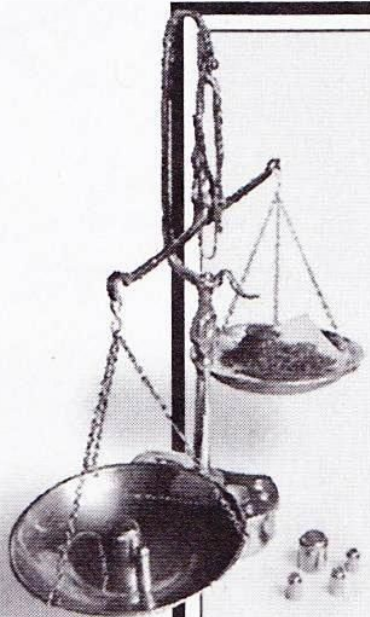
How do the Vedas measure up to these criteria?

They should:

1. Magnify God and answer our questions about him
2. Be free from myths
3. Be free from demonism

what was the tree from which [the gods] carved the sky and the earth?” asks one rishi.⁶ Certain hymns indicate that matter existed before God, whereas others state that it was God who produced the matter that formed the universe.

⁷ According to yet another hymn, the gods made the universe from the sacrifice of a cosmic man. “The moon was produced from his mind (*manas*), the sun (*surya*) from his eye, . . . from his head



The Upanishads—The Love of Philosophy

“All the philosophical systems and religions of India, heretical or orthodox, have sprung up from the Upanishads,” states the book *The Vedic Age*.¹ It is in these compositions that the cycle of Karma and rebirth—the basic belief of Hindus, Jains, and Sikhs—is first taught. What else do they teach?

Reflecting on Life's Meaning

² The Upanishads continue the rishis' search for truth that began in the Vedas. “The sages in the Upanishads had already started with the idea that there was a supreme controller or essence presiding over man and the universe,” notes Dr. S. Dasgupta. “But what was its nature? Could it be identified with any . . . new deity or was it no deity at all? The Upanishads present to us the history of this quest,” he adds.²

³ In forest retreats, sages meditated on and debated such questions as: “What is the source of this universe? . . . From where do we come? By what power do we live? Where do we find rest [at death]? Who rules over our joys and sorrows?”³ Expecting to find answers through their own reason and experience, rather than by revelation from God, they said: “Tell us this, O you philosophers.”⁴

The Fruits of Philosophy

⁴ The sages attribute the creation of the world to *Brahman*, who, according to *Isa Upanishad*, is a being, separate from the universe. (Verse 1) The *Mundaka Upanishad*, on the other hand, regards Brahman as the universe itself. A third view, based on the *Svetasva-*

tara Upanishad, suggests that whereas Brahman is real, the universe is simply an illusion (*maya*).

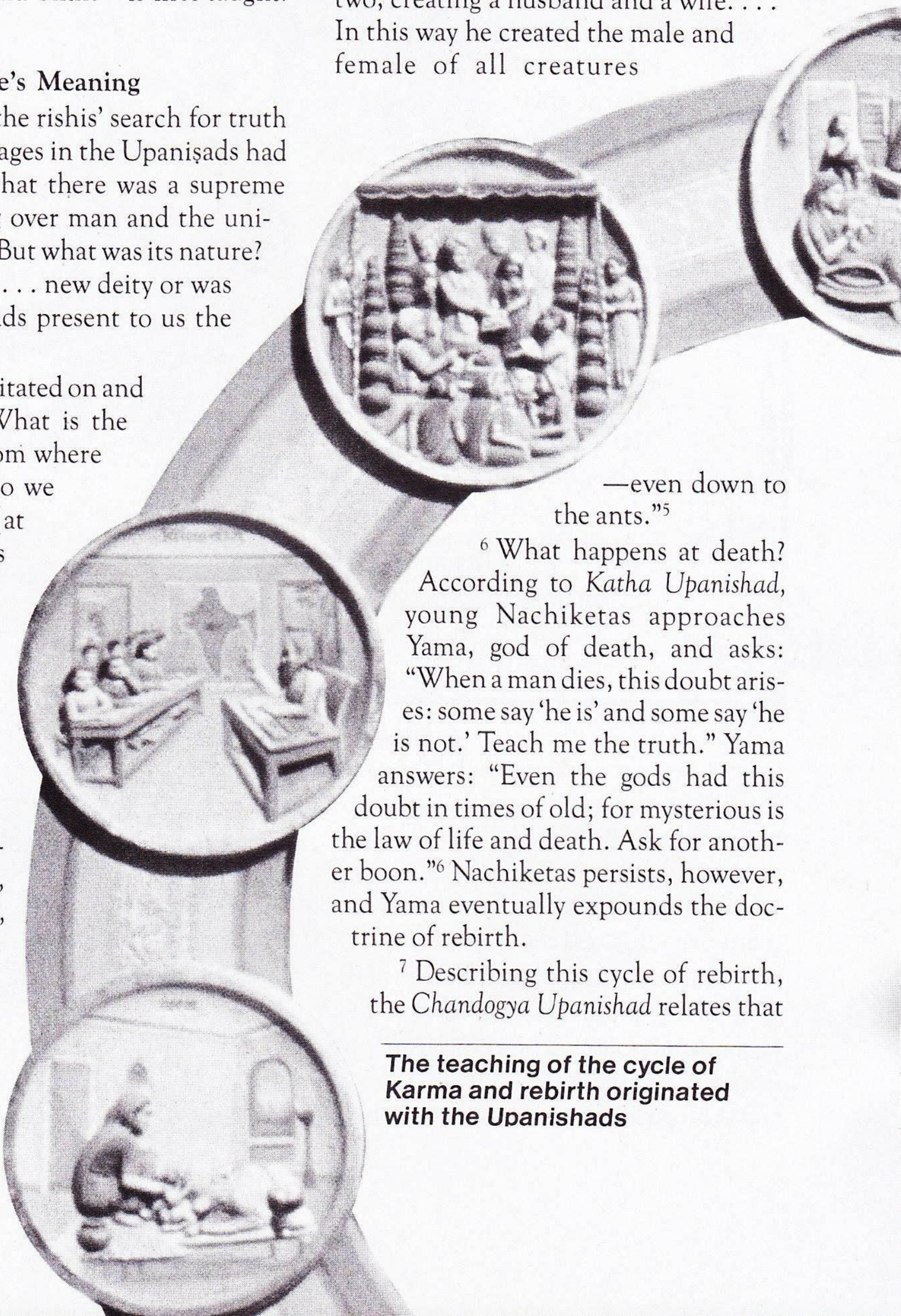
⁵ A creation account in the *Chandogya Upanishad* asserts that the world was born from a giant egg. On the origin of life, the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* states that the Creator, feeling lonely and unhappy, “grew as large as a man and a woman entwined, and then divided himself in two, creating a husband and a wife. . . . In this way he created the male and female of all creatures

—even down to the ants.”⁵

⁶ What happens at death? According to *Katha Upanishad*, young Nachiketas approaches Yama, god of death, and asks: “When a man dies, this doubt arises: some say ‘he is’ and some say ‘he is not.’ Teach me the truth.” Yama answers: “Even the gods had this doubt in times of old; for mysterious is the law of life and death. Ask for another boon.”⁶ Nachiketas persists, however, and Yama eventually expounds the doctrine of rebirth.

⁷ Describing this cycle of rebirth, the *Chandogya Upanishad* relates that

The teaching of the cycle of Karma and rebirth originated with the Upanishads



at death a person's soul goes to the moon, and it remains there until his "good works are consumed."⁷ After that he falls as rain to the earth to be "born here as rice and barley, as herbs and trees." He then must wait to enter a womb until "some one or other eats him as food and emits him as semen."⁸ His caste, or life-form, is determined at his rebirth by his past Karma.

The Search Continues

⁸ Like the Vedas, "the *Upanishads* left some great issues un-

The Upanishads—Did You Know?

"Literally, ['Upanishad'] means sitting near devotedly, and so brings concretely to mind an earnest disciple learning from his guru, his spiritual master. It also means secret teaching—secret, no doubt, because a teaching vouchsafed only to those who are spiritually ready to receive it."—*The Spiritual Heritage of India*, Swami Prabhavananda, 1980, page 39.

settled," notes the book *India*. "The individual Hindu is still free to decide whether he believes the one Supreme Reality is an impersonal . . . spirit . . . or a personal God. . . . Similarly the believer may decide that the world is one aspect of Brahman or Brahma, or that it is simply Its or His creation—or he may remain undecided."⁹

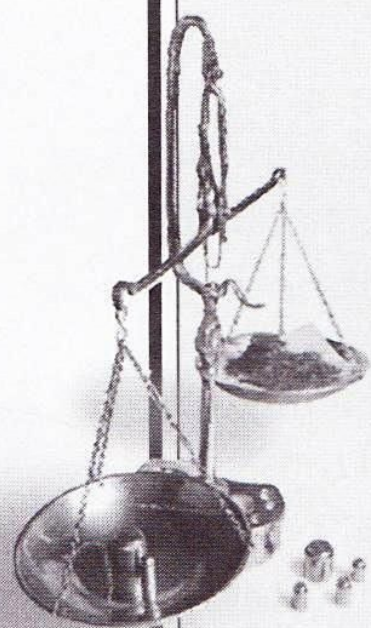
⁹ Although the teaching of Karma and rebirth is today viewed by devout Hindus as divinely revealed truth, in the book *The Vedic Age* we read that "the *Upanishads* do not contain 'superhuman conceptions,' but human, absolutely human attempts to come nearer to the truth."¹⁰ Similarly, the book *Advanced History of India* notes: "The *upanishads* reveal the nature of guesses at Truth, from different standpoints; these guesses ultimately led to the evolution of [Indian] systems of philosophy."¹¹

¹⁰ In order to know God's truth, therefore, you need to continue your search beyond the Vedas and the *Upanishads*. By so doing, you will demonstrate that you truly love God and want to worship him in truth. So let us next examine the epics and the *Bhagavad Gita*, the foremost traditional Smriti scriptures. Can they help us in our search?

How do the Upanishads measure up to these criteria?

They should:

1. Magnify God and answer our questions about him
2. Be available to all
3. Be easy to understand
4. Teach true doctrines and morals
5. Be free from myths



The Epics —Truth and Fable

“From the beginning the Rāmāyana and the Mahābhārata have exercised a profound influence upon India,” observes Swami Prabhavananda. Their legends “have supplied poets and dramatists, theologians and political thinkers, painters and sculptors, with their . . . never-failing inspiration.”¹ Doubtless you are familiar with many of these legends. How do you view them?

² Today many Hindus look to the epics as a source of moral and spiritual guidance. Others consider them to have primarily historical rather than religious value. But do they contain truths about God and his worship?

Elements of Truth

³ “The great battle described in the *Mahabharata* may have a historical basis in the memory of a battle in north India in the tenth century BC,” suggests M. Stutley in *Hinduism*.² Archaeologists have confirmed that some places this epic mentions did exist between 800 and 400 B.C.E. “The *epic* substance was enlarged and embellished” over the centuries, however, to include “a mass of legends, myths and fancies mixed up with morality, religion and philosophy,” notes the *History of Philosophy Eastern and Western*.³

⁴ The *Mahabharata*’s story of Manu, who saved humanity from a global deluge, also contains some historical truth. The flood was “the most important landmark in the history of the ancient world, and common flood legends suggest that the same event has been described in Indian, Hebrew, and Babylonian accounts,” says *The Vedic Age*.^{4*}

⁵ That same book says that the story of Rama, when “divested of its miraculous, fabulous, incredible and mythological elements, clearly indicates that he [Rama] was a great king who spread Aryan ideas and institutions into regions far and wide.”⁵

⁶ In addition to these historical features, the epics also contain moral and religious principles. For example, the

* The Hebrew account, the oldest and most accurate, appears in Genesis, the Bible’s first book, chapters 6, 7, and 8.

The Epics —Did You Know?

“Embedded in one book of the great Indian epic the Mahābhārata occurs the Bhagavad-Gītā, or Song of God, the most popular work in all the religious literature of India. . . . Without fear of contradiction it may be said to be the Holy Bible of India, though, unlike the Upaniṣads, it is not regarded as Śruti, or revealed scripture, but only as Smṛti, or tradition elaborating the doctrines of the Upaniṣads.”—*The Spiritual Heritage of India*, Swami Prabhavananda, 1980, page 95.

Mahabharata encourages people to be hospitable, saying: “Even to foes who visit us as guests due hospitality should be displayed; the tree screens with its leaves, the man who fells it.”⁶ Elsewhere it says: “Heaven is not so pleased with costly gifts, offered in hope of future recompense, as with the merest trifle set apart from honest gains, and sanctified by faith.”⁷

Imaginary Tales

⁷ In contrast with these fine principles, however, the epics at times reflect the opinions of their compilers. In the *Ramayana*, for example, the earth is said to be supported by eight elephants who move when they are tired and thus cause earthquakes. The compilers were also unaware of the Himalayan source of the river Ganges. They thought it trickled from heaven.—*Ramayana* 1:40-44.

⁸ Did you know that the writers of the

How do the epics measure up to these criteria?

They should:

1. Magnify God and answer our questions about him
2. Teach true doctrines and morals
3. Be free from myths

Mahabharata adopted the prevailing view that women had been created only to corrupt chaste men to prevent them from gaining salvation? (*Mahabharata* 13:40) Even the *Gita* views women as of inferior birth and classes them with menial slaves. Do you believe this? Does it seem just and reasonable?—*Bhagavad Gita* 9:32.

⁹ The absence of inspired Sruti led the epic writers to create fables in order to answer questions. In explaining death, for example, the *Mahabharata* states that at one time humans multiplied without dying and became so many that “there was no space to breathe.”⁸ Afraid that this would result in the ‘earth sinking into the waters,’ the Creator produced a goddess to bring death to humans either by diseases or by injury.—*Mahabharata* 12:248-250.

¹⁰ According to Indian scholars, the com-

pilars of the epics also created its legends. In the *Gita*, Krishna claims that he is God. Regarding this, Dr. S. Radhakrishnan states: “The poet Vyasa [who wrote it] vividly imagines how Krishna as an incarnate God would speak of himself.” Similarly, author M. Hariharan notes that “somebody else must have made Krishna God and made him perform the supernatural deeds.”⁹ In the *Ramayana*, Rama does not claim to be a god but merely a human suffering for his sins.—*Ramayana* 3:63, 64.

Epics—The Choice

¹¹ The epic poems were originally sung at the courts of kings during great festivals held to proclaim the fame of the princes. Compilers later added religious fables.¹⁰ “The most brilliant of these additions,” notes D. D. Kosambi, “is the *Bhagavad-Gītā*, a discourse supposedly uttered by the god Krishna just before the fighting. The god himself was new; his supreme godhead would not be admitted for centuries afterwards.”¹¹ In this way the epics came to include historical truths alongside religious fables.

¹² So as you continue your search for Sruti, a complete revelation of God’s truth, consider next the Puranas, upon which Hindu worship is based today.



The Puranas and Hindu Worship Today

Present-day Hindu worship is based on the scriptures known as Puranas. Unlike the Vedas, they promote use of images, temple rituals, and pilgrimages to sacred places. Through such practices, worshipers seek God's blessing in order to break free from the cycle of rebirth.

² "The Purāṇas have been called 'the Veda of the common folk', since they present much traditional and orthodox material through myth and legend, story and symbol," notes *Hindu World*.¹ Although the Puranas are not generally accepted by orthodox Brahmans and reformers, they are popular among ordinary Hindus. Can they help you to worship God in truth? Consider what they teach.

Creation in the Puranas

³ Influenced by Vedic ideas, the compilers of the *Vishnu Purana* believed that the universe consisted of seven upper stories, with the earth at the bottom, and seven lower stories, inhabited by a half-human, half-serpent race.

⁴ In the *Bhagavata Purana*, the sun and moon are thought to revolve around the earth. The moon, because of a higher velocity, is said to overtake the sun during its orbit. The earth, resting on a cobra, is divided into continents that are separated by oceans of water, wine, and ghee.—*Bhagavata Purana* 5:16-22, 25.

The Search for God

⁵ The Puranas, like the Vedas and the Upanishads, continue the search for the true God. Although the sages adore many deities, they earnestly desire to know: "Which deity shall a devotee desiring liberation worship . . . ? Who is the god of gods?" What important questions these are!

⁶ In reply the *Brahma Purana* notes that although Brahma, Vishnu, or Siva are worshiped,

the true Creator is someone else.² Confirming this point, Brahma states in the *Bhagavata Purana* that both he and Siva have yet to fathom the Creator's nature.—*Bhagavata Purana* 2:6.

⁷ Without a revelation from God, however, it was not possible for the sages to know God. As a result, some worshipers came to imagine him to be a human, an animal, or even half-human, half-beast. The *Bhagavata Purana* describes Vishnu as a fish "of golden colour, having a horn, and a body extending over ten million Yojanas."^{3*} The *Vayu Purana* portrays him as a dark-colored boar with a height of 4,000 miles.

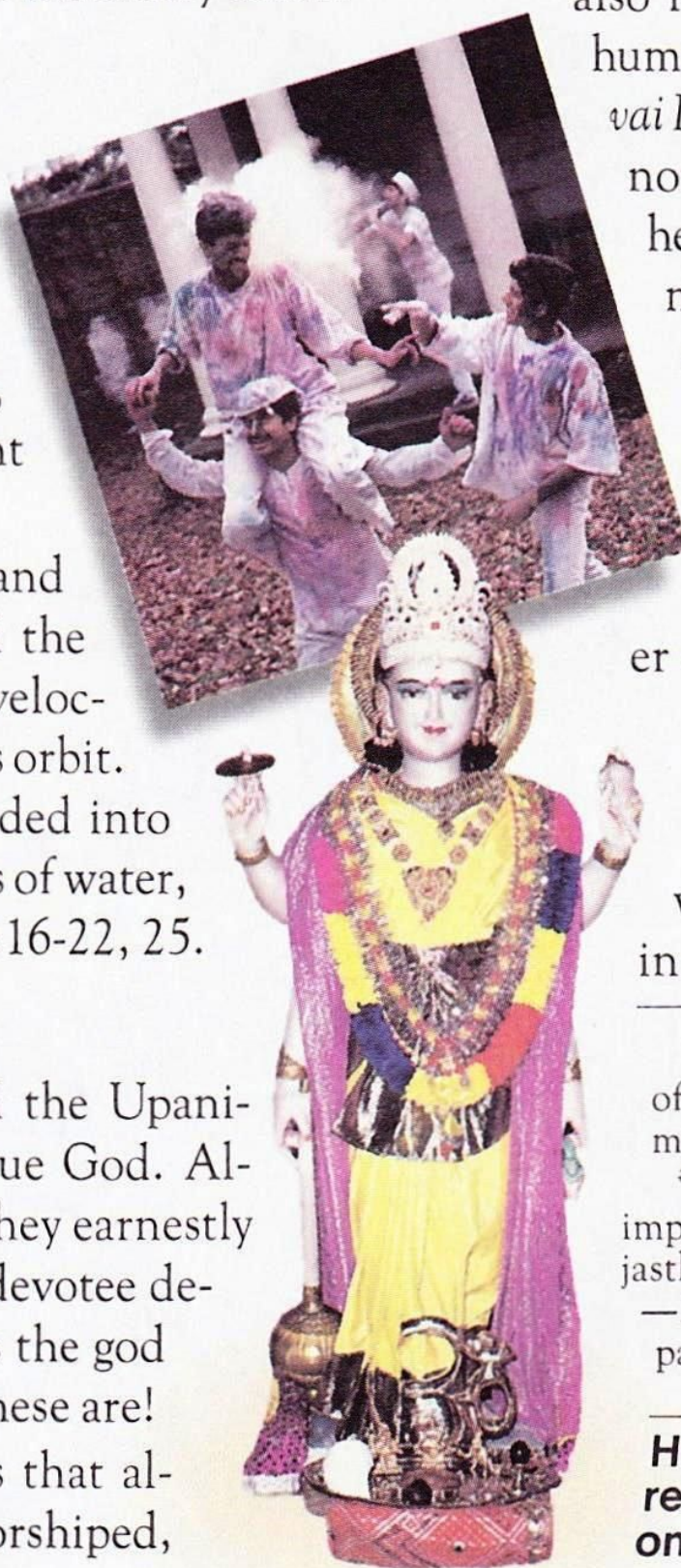
⁸ The compilers of Puranic legends also imagined that the gods had human weaknesses. The *Brahmavai Purana* states that the wise do not worship Brahma because he was cursed for having committed a gross wrong.^{4#} Other Puranas describe Siva as "a bad provider [who] allowed his family to starve, while he himself indulged in opium and other drugs," according to *Hindu World*.⁵

⁹ Disturbed by reports of one deity's relationships with local milkmaids, a king in the *Bhagavata Purana* asks:

* A yojana is an ancient measure of distance, varying from four to ten miles.

"In the whole of India, only one important temple—at Pushkar in Rajasthan—is dedicated to Brahma."⁶—*India*, 1986, Time-Life Books, page 38.

Hindu temple worship and religious festivals are based on the Puranas



‘How can the divine lord who was born to establish virtue and repress vice, practice its opposite, namely the corruption of other men’s wives?’⁷ To this the sage replies that if superior beings deviate from virtue, then it cannot be viewed as sin, just as blame cannot be attributed to fire if it consumes impure things.⁸

Methods of Worship

¹⁰ Puranic worship centers around carefully designed temples, or shrines. Their ground plans follow a mandala, which, according to Swami Harshana-

How do the Puranas measure up to these criteria?

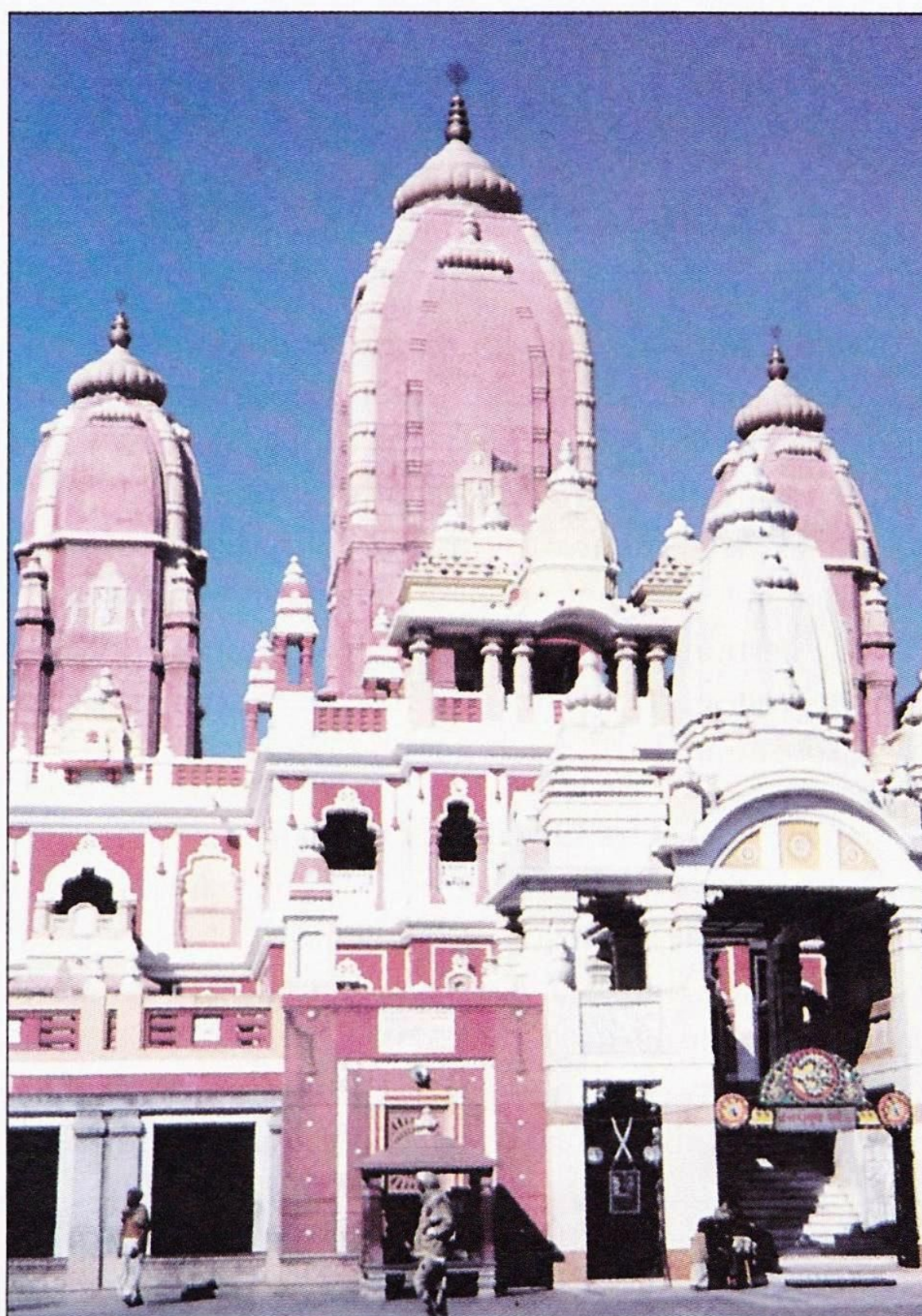
They should:

1. Magnify God and answer our questions about him
2. Teach true doctrines and morals
3. Be free from myths
4. Be free from demonism
5. Provide solutions for our problems and have a good effect on our lives



nda, “is a geometric diagram with occult potentialities.”⁹ The temple’s most sacred object is the yantra, a gold plate with occult diagrams. In the past it was used by followers of Tantric sects who practiced the sexual rites depicted on the walls of great Hindu and Jain temples.

¹¹ Idols are bathed in water or milk by worshipers who hope to acquire wealth or good health. Then, according to the *Brahmavai Purana*, tilaks are applied to people’s foreheads to ensure the magical



potency of rituals.¹⁰ Lamps are lit and flowers are offered to ward off evil spirits, as mantras are chanted in praise of deities or to seek their favor.

¹² The *Skanda Purana* traces the use of idols to a curse upon the gods by the goddess Parvati for their intrusion into her privacy. The *Encyclopaedia of Puranic Beliefs and Practices* states: “This seems to explain the [Hindu] practice of worshipping stone-blocks as gods, and also well carved out idols.”¹¹

What Will You Choose?

¹³ The Puranas are classed as Smriti by Hindus because these writings are not divinely inspired but are of human origin. So if we earnestly desire God to accept our worship and bless us, we must continue our search for Sruti. What guidance can gurus give us?

The Gurus—Their Role in Worship

Swami Prabhavananda writes: “The direction of a competent teacher is essential if one is to attain to knowledge of God, for religion is a practical science to which neither books nor scriptures can be a complete guide.”¹ For this reason many Hindus search for gurus who can help them work out a system of belief and worship.

² We certainly need guidance to understand spiritual truths. Since gurus are not dependent on scriptures, from what source are their teachings and miracles?

The Origin of Guruism

³ Guruism is first introduced in the Upanishads as a challenge to the authority of the Vedas. To replace costly Vedic rituals, the Upanishads promoted ‘secret knowledge’ as the means to salvation.²

⁴ The rejection of the Vedas increased the importance of the gurus. Liberation, it was claimed, could be attained only after a person had been initiated by a guru and received a secret mantra or some other device. Says *The World of Gurus*: “Being indispensable, the guru also tended to become supreme, even above the scriptures. . . . His own authority, derived from his private mystical experience, was final.”³

⁵ Having supplanted the scriptures, in effect, the gurus soon became identified with God. The guru is also God and it should not be debated, claims the *Yogashikhopanishad*.⁴ At his initiation, a guru is said to receive supernatural experiences from his deity while in a state of trance and is regarded thereafter as the embodiment of that deity. “The Guru is God Himself manifesting in a personal form to guide the aspirant,” explains Swami Sivananda.⁵

⁶ Claiming equality with God, the gurus then add in the Upanishads: “One should worship with extreme devotion the *guru* who imparts divine wisdom, who

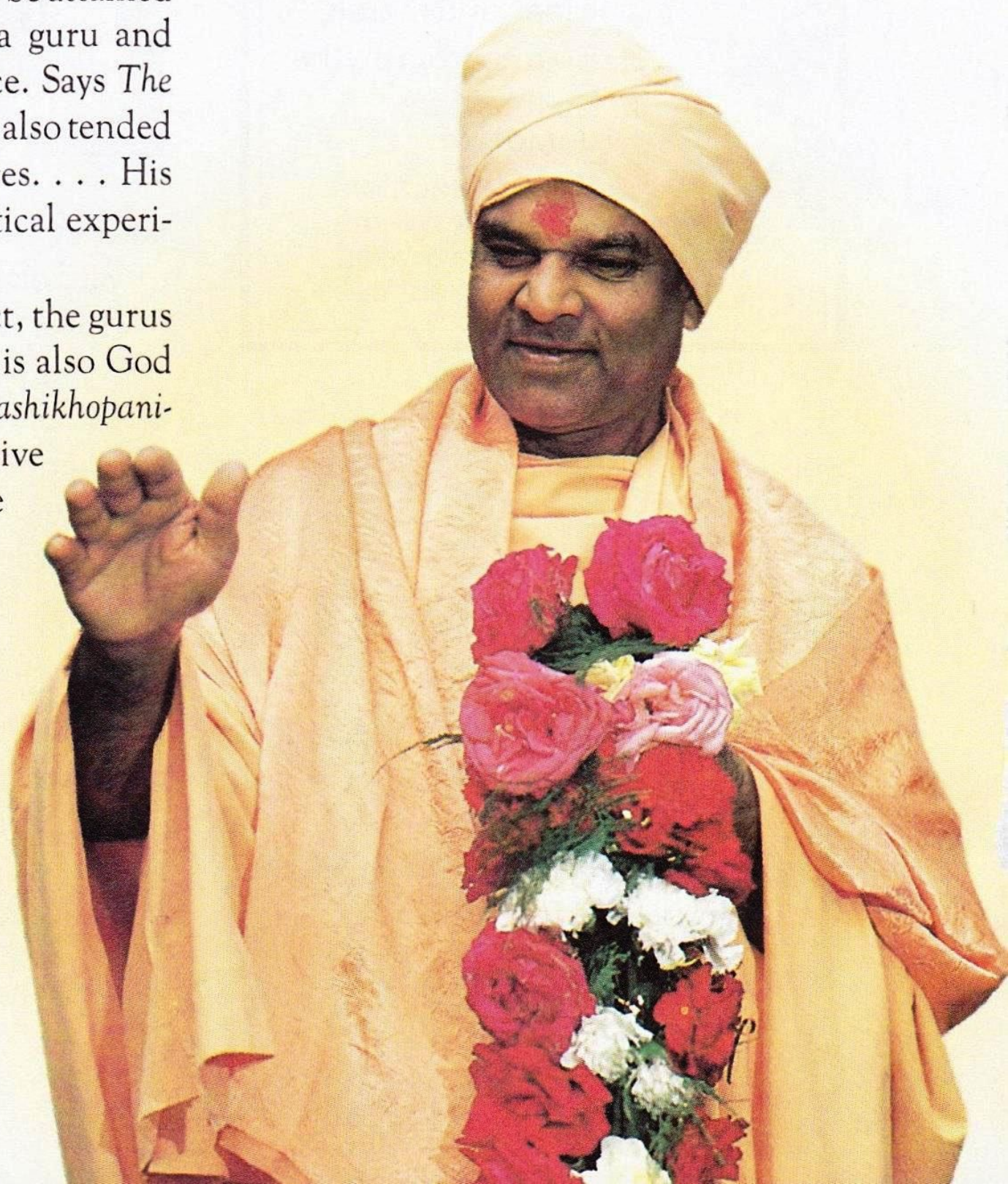
is the spiritual guide, who is the Supreme Lord Himself.”⁶ Thus, notes *Hindu World*: “Lights are waved before him, incense burned in his presence, hymns are sung and prostrations made. . . . The guru’s feet are washed and the water in which this is done is passed around to his followers who drink it.”⁷

Miracles—From What Source?

⁷ Many people follow gurus because they are impressed by the gurus’ miracles, which the devotees attribute to God.* The Hindu scriptures, however, record that evil persons, such as Ravana, possessed similar supernatural powers. Is there, then, another source besides God for such powerful works?

⁸ Gurus acquire their supernatural

* These include such things as clairvoyance, healing, levitation, and walking on fire.



Yoga —Did You Know?

“What might appear a superficial dabbling with pranayama [breathing exercises] and the asanas [Yogic postures], may turn out to be the first step along a path of occultism beset with potential hazards for the unsuspecting. The physical exercises of yoga are specifically designed to prepare the body for the psycho-spiritual changes that are to come. Down the ages yoga has been used first and foremost as a vestibule leading to the inner sanctuary of occult experience.”—*Tantrism*, Benjamin Walker, 1985, page 125.

powers by practicing Yogic arts. But in the *Yoga Sutra*, Patanjali, the father of Yoga philosophy, attributes these powers to evil “celestial beings” whose chief aim is, according to Swami Vivekananda, “to tempt the Yogi” that he should not gain perfect freedom.⁸ The swami therefore “warned against striving for such sorcerous powers and stressed the need for totally avoiding them,” notes *Tantrism*.⁹

Liberation—How Real?

⁹ Ancient Hindus turned to Yoga to discover the ultimate truth that the Vedas failed to teach. The *Katha Upanishad* says that truth cannot be known through scriptures or by reason but by mystic experiences alone. (1:2:23) For this reason, the Hindu swami Sivananda states: “Intellect is a hindrance. That which separates you from God is mind.”¹⁰ So mystics practice Yogic meditation in order to

dull the intellect and to experience trances or feelings of ecstasy. Those attaining such a state are said to have found truth and to have attained moksha.

¹⁰ By emptying the mind and deadening the senses, a Yogi can see and hear strange things. “If, however, [Yogic] meditation has been combined, as it often is, with such other techniques as fasting, drug-taking, extreme isolation, and torturelike activities, the deprived [mental] state can be attended by bizarre hallucinations. It may also be attended by ‘mystical’ events of the kundalini type,” states *Understanding Yoga*.^{11*} The Yogi is led to believe that these unusual experiences during his nonrational state are both real and good.

¹¹ Following this course, some Yogis claim to experience a oneness with the spirit world, which they say is God. In the book *Mysticism Sacred and Profane*, R. C. Zaehner warns: “This emptiness is dangerous for this is a ‘house swept and garnished,’ and though it is possible that God may enter in if the furniture is fair, it is equally likely that the proverbial seven devils will rush in if . . . there is no furniture at all.”^{12#} For this reason gurus often warn new disciples that Yoga may expose them to demonic influence. Would such warnings be necessary if the true God were involved?

¹² Many gurus promote their personal beliefs, claiming that these are based on reliable scriptures. The Society for Krishna Consciousness, for example, asserts that its beliefs are founded on ‘the Vedic scriptures.’ On the other hand, *The World of Gurus* states: “No attempt is made to establish the authenticity of scriptures . . . If [the devotees] read the scriptures they would know that the stories of Krishna and Radha are not based on authoritative scriptures, much less on facts.”¹³

¹³ Since gurus are guided by their personal experience and knowledge, where are you to look for God-revealed truth? Obviously, you need to consult scriptures that are truly inspired by God. Where can you find them?

* Yogis describe *kundalini* as a mysterious energy that, like a coiled serpent, lies at the base of the spinal column. When it is aroused, either through physical or sexual exercises, the Yogi experiences strange sensations and visions, which he interprets to be a “liberation,” or the merging of his own self with God.

Zaehner is referring to the words of Jesus, recorded in the Bible book of Luke, chapter 11, verses 24-26.

Identifying God-Inspired Truth

Did you know that modern Hindu reformers such as Ramakrishna and Vivekenanda were influenced by the Bible? Mohandas Gandhi also maintained that its teachings can 'solve the problems of the whole world.' Both Hindus and Sikhs are indebted to it for their concept of bhakti, which, says *Hindu World*, resulted from "the impact of Christianity in the early centuries of the present era."¹ Thus, the Bible has earned the respect of great Indian thinkers.

Scripture and Science

² Written nearly 3,500 years ago, the opening verse of the Bible described the origin of the universe, saying: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." (Genesis 1:1) In harmony with this statement, scientists now acknowledge that the universe did have a beginning, a genesis.²

³ The source of matter in the universe, says the Bible, is "the abundance of [God's] dynamic energy." (Isaiah 40:26) Today, some 2,700 years after that was written, modern science has discovered that all matter is basically materialized energy.³

⁴ At a time when men believed that the universe was made up of the few thousand stars they could see with unaided eyes, the Bible compared the number of stars to the grains of sand on the seashore. (Genesis 22:17) In the past this comparison was said to be greatly exaggerated, yet today the evidence shows that the number of stars is indeed incalculable.⁴ Similarly, far in advance of modern science, the Bible accurately described the earth as a "circle," or globe, that is 'hanging upon nothing.'—Isaiah 40:22; Job 26:7.

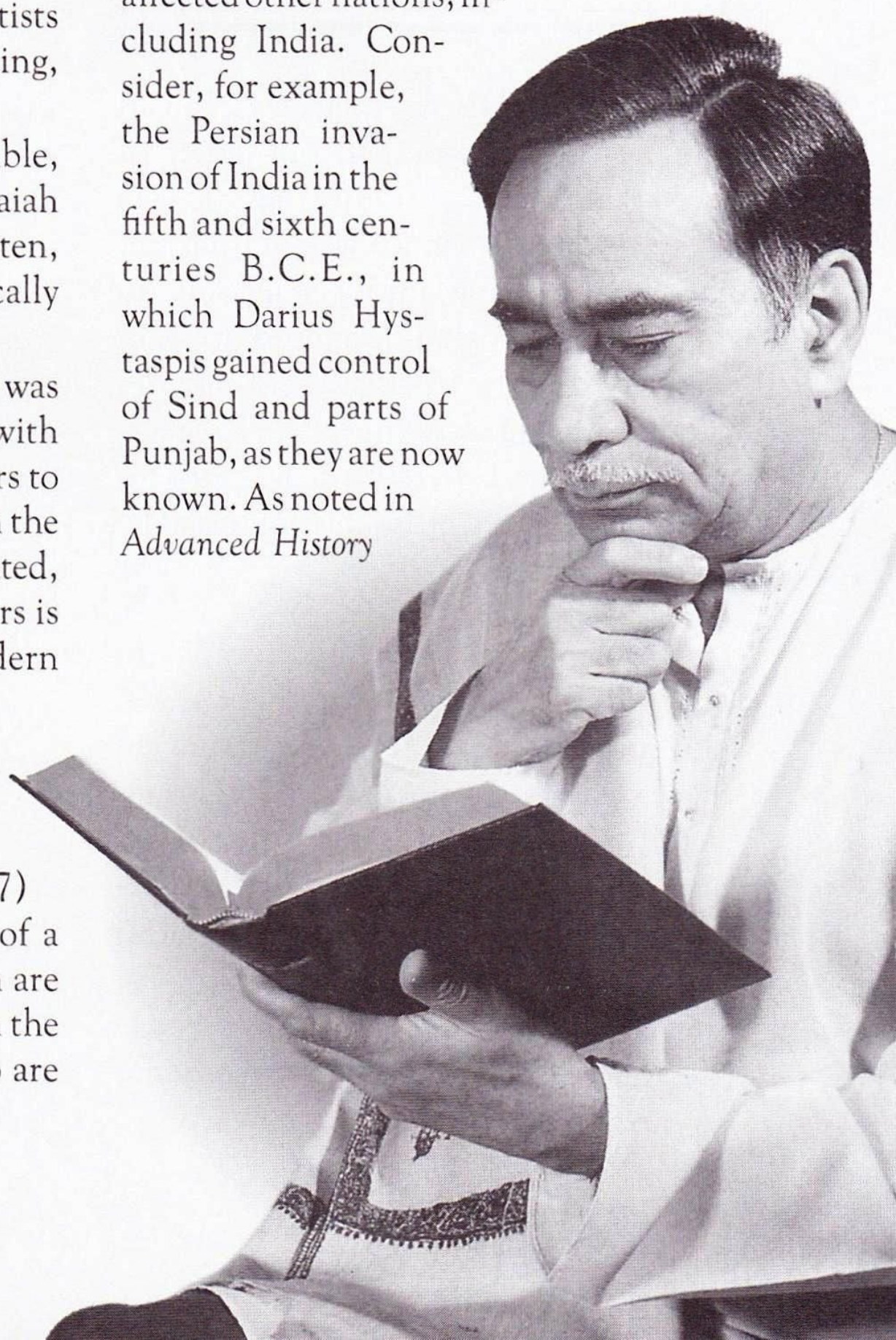
⁵ The Bible states that Adam, the first man, was created "out of dust from the ground." (Genesis 2:7) We now know that our human body is composed of a number of different chemical elements, all of which are found in the earth. Amazing insight is also evident in the Bible's comment that 'parts of a developing embryo are

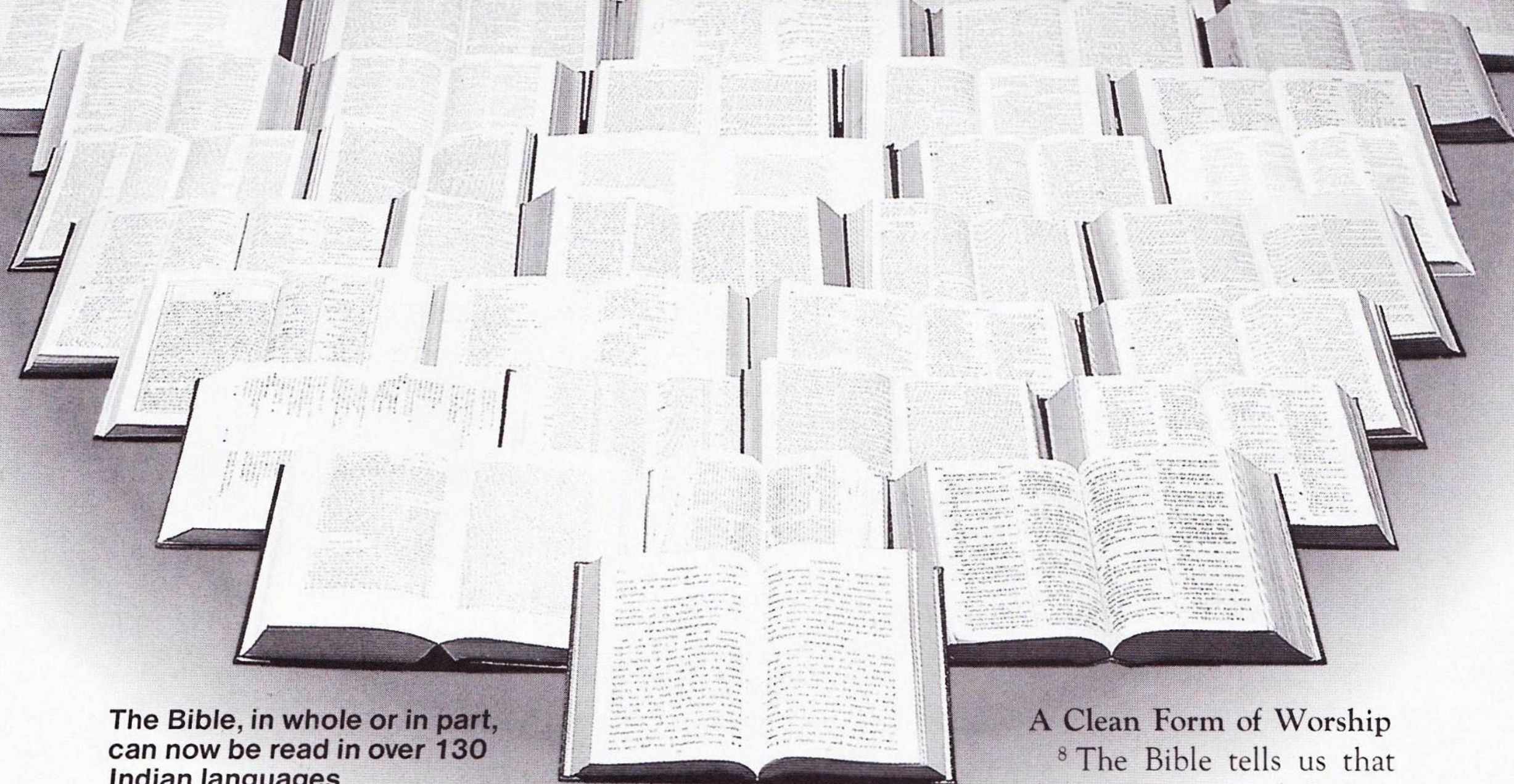
written down in a book.' This was 3,000 years before modern science discovered the genetic code, which, like a book, contains all aspects of a growing human embryo.—Psalm 139:14-16.

An Authentic Record

⁶ Students of history are often amazed at the Bible's accuracy. Says Indian scholar D. D. Kosambi: "The historical value of the Veda is rather small in comparison with that of the Old Testament of the Bible, which was always presented as history by people who retained contact with their particular land. The archaeology of Palestine . . . provides ample confirmation of many Biblical events."⁵

⁷ The Bible also records key events in world history and how these affected other nations, including India. Consider, for example, the Persian invasion of India in the fifth and sixth centuries B.C.E., in which Darius Hystaspis gained control of Sind and parts of Punjab, as they are now known. As noted in *Advanced History*





**The Bible, in whole or in part,
can now be read in over 130
Indian languages**

of India, "this territory continued to form part of the Persian empire under Xerxes."⁶ This historical fact was accurately recorded in the Bible at Esther 1:1 about the year 475 B.C.E.—one of the oldest known references to India.⁷

Jehovah —How Different?

Comparing the Hindu concept of God with that of other religions, Dr. S. Radhakrishnan observes: "The God of Hebrews [Jehovah] is of a different type. He is personal and active in history and interested in the changes and chances of this developing world. He is a Being who communicates with us."
—*Hinduism and Its Rationalism*, M. Hariharan, 1987, page 56.

A Clean Form of Worship

⁸ The Bible tells us that there is one true God. Only in

the Bible has he revealed to us his name, JEHOVAH. There he states: "Before me there was no God formed, and after me there continued to be none." Jehovah, therefore, does not have avatars, nor does he exist in different aspects. All the qualities and forces needed to sustain creation exist in him alone. "To whom can you people liken God, and what likeness can you put alongside him?" the prophet asks. —Isaiah 40:18; 43:10.

⁹ In Jehovah's worship, it is clean conduct, not ritual, that is required for his blessing. God says: "Of what benefit to me is the multitude of your sacrifices? . . . Incense—it is something detestable to me. New moon and sabbath, the calling of a convention—I cannot put up with the use of uncanny power along with the solemn assembly. . . . Even though you make many prayers, I am not listening; . . . cease to do bad. Learn to do good." —Isaiah 1:11-17.

¹⁰ Those who live by the Bible are well protected from the dangers of spiritism. It counsels: "There should not be found in you anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, . . . anyone who looks for omens or a sorcerer, or one who binds others with a spell or anyone who consults a spirit medium or a professional foreteller of events or anyone who inquires of the dead. For everybody doing these things is something detestable to Jehovah." —Deuteronomy 18:10-12.

A Superior Moral Code

¹¹ Another important difference between the Bible and other holy books is its power to help us lead better lives. For example, it states: "Let the stealer steal no more, but rather let him do hard work, doing with his hands what is good work, that he may have something to distribute to someone in need. Let a rotten saying not proceed out of your mouth, but whatever saying is good for building up as the need may be . . . Let all malicious bitterness and anger . . . be taken away from you along with all badness. But become kind to one another." (Ephesians 4:28-32) What fine counsel!

¹² The superiority of the Bible's moral code is also evident in its appeal to a person's love for God. For instance, it exhorts women: "Do not let your adornment be that of the external braiding of the hair and of the putting on of gold ornaments or the wearing of outer garments, but let it be the secret person of the heart in the incorruptible apparel of the quiet and mild spirit, which is of great value in the eyes of God." Husbands are similarly counseled to 'assign honor' to their wives "in order for [their] prayers not to be hindered."—1 Peter 3:3, 4, 7.

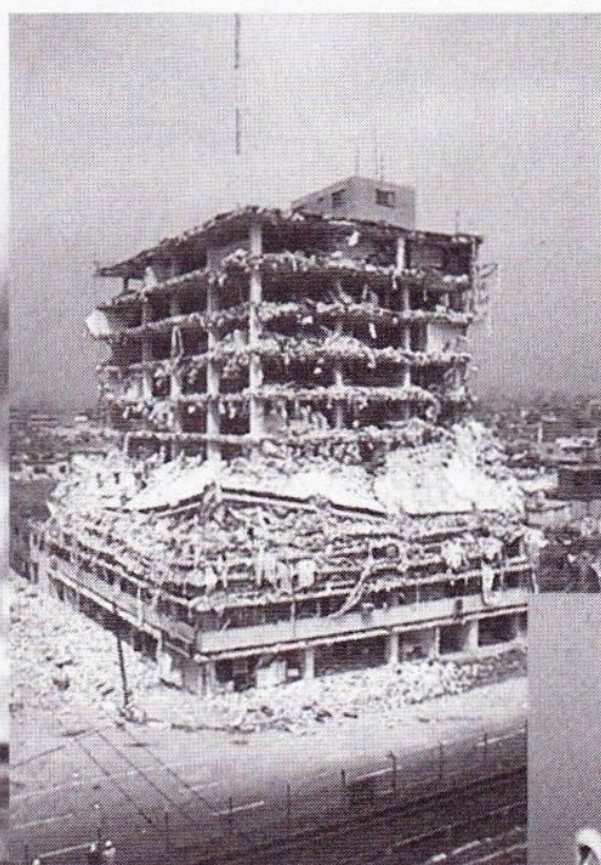
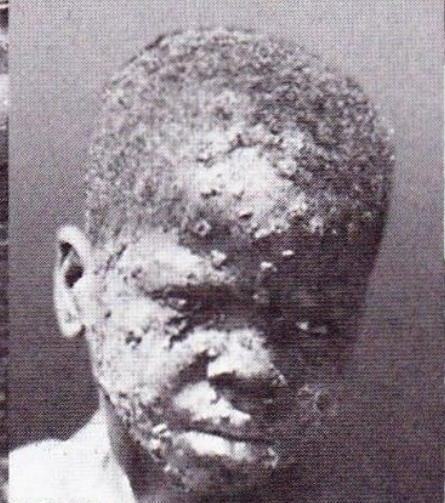
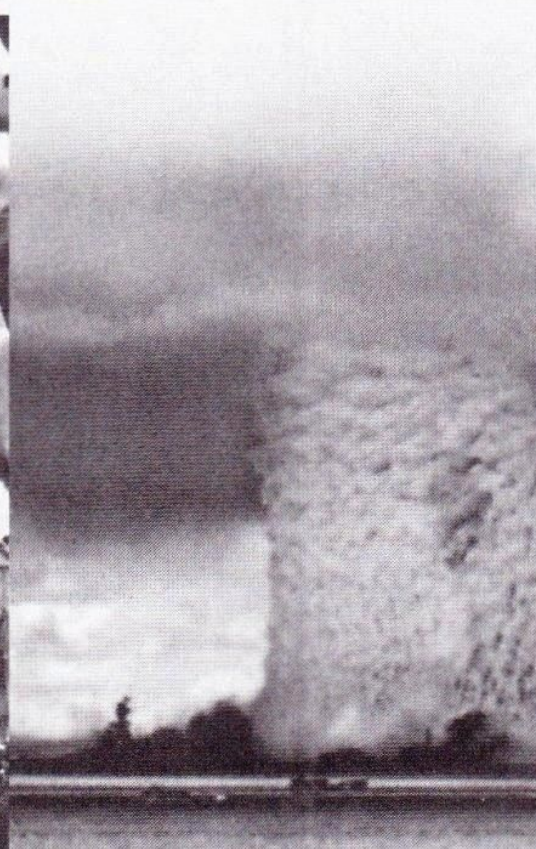
The Greatest Evidence of All

¹³ Is the God of the Bible the true and living God? In order to prove his Godship, Jehovah invites the gods of

other religions to a test. "Summon the nations to come to the trial," he says. "Which of their gods can predict the future? Which of them foretold what is happening now? Let these gods bring in their witnesses to prove that they are right."—Isaiah 43:9, *Today's English Version*.

¹⁴ Who has been able to explain the significant events of today's world? Nearly 2,000 years ago, the Bible accurately foretold the turmoil that the world has witnessed since the year 1914. It said: "Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; and there will be great earthquakes, and in one place after another pestilences and food shortages." (Luke 21:10, 11) In contrast with Hindu teachings, the Bible, now translated in whole or in part into some 2,000 languages and dialects, contains

The Bible is the only sacred book to foretell the world events that have happened since the year 1914!



true prophecy, which we are seeing fulfilled in our day.

¹⁵ Decades before World War I began in 1914, Jehovah's worshipers were making known the significance of that year.

How does the Bible measure up to these criteria?

It should:

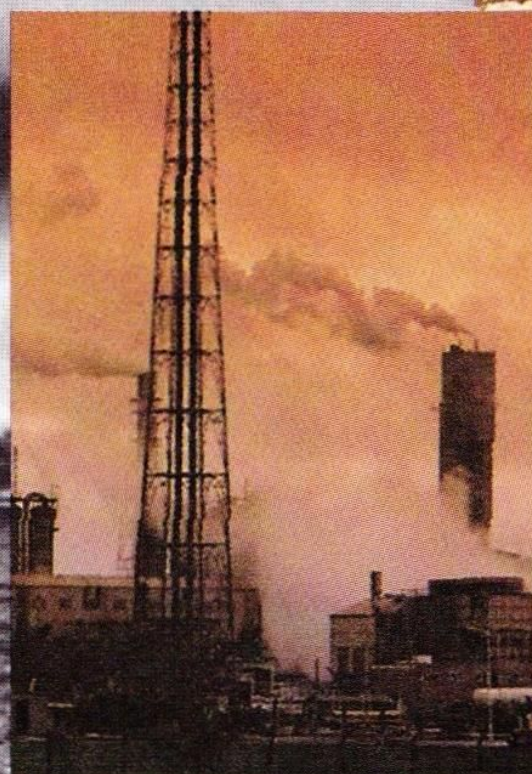
1. Magnify God and answer our questions about him
2. Be available to all
3. Be easy to understand
4. Teach true doctrines and morals
5. Be free from myths
6. Be free from demonism
7. Provide solutions for our problems and have a good effect on our lives



The *New York World* of August 30, 1914, explains: "The terrific war outbreak in Europe has fulfilled an extraordinary prophecy. For a quarter of a century past, through preachers and through press, the 'International Bible Students' [as Jehovah's Witnesses were then known] . . . have been proclaiming to the world that the Day of Wrath prophesied in the Bible would dawn in 1914."⁸ Ever since the momentous events of that year, so accurately foretold in the Bible alone, the whole world system of things has been in its "last days."—2 Timothy 3:1-5.

¹⁶ The fulfillment of many other Bible prophecies establishes it as "inspired of God."* (2 Timothy 3:16) Therefore, you can have complete confidence in the things it teaches and foretells. This includes God's purpose soon to rid the earth of all religion that dishonors God (as bloodguilty Christendom has done) and to establish peace and harmony between all races of mankind forever. (Revelation 18:4, 5) It is urgent that you heed the exhortation: "Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of the judgment by him has arrived, and so worship the One who made the heaven and the earth." (Revelation 14:7) What does this require?

* For a detailed discussion of the fulfillment of Bible prophecies, see pages 117-48 of the book *The Bible—God's Word or Man's?* published in 1989 by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.



Worshippers of God Love His Truth

From our examination of various holy books, we realize that the Bible is unique as God's inspired Word. It is not just a book *about* God, but it is *from* God. It teaches us all we need to know about true worship, our happiness, and the future.

² To receive God's blessing, as we have seen, we need to worship him not only out of love but also in truth. The Bible states: "God is a Spirit, and those worshiping him must worship with spirit and truth." (John 4:24) Jehovah

God is "a Spirit," invisible to human eyes. To worship him "with spirit" means that our sacred service to God is motivated by a heart full of love and faith. (Matthew 22:37-40; Galatians 2:16) How do we worship God "with . . . truth"? By rejecting falsehoods and by learning to do God's will as revealed through the pages of the Bible.

Help to Understand the Scriptures

³ Each one of us can learn much by reading the Bible personally. To gain an understanding of its teachings, however, we must accept help from the true servants of God. Nearly 2,000 years ago, an Ethiopian court official was reading from the prophecies of Isaiah when Philip, a disciple of Jesus, approached him and asked: "Do you actually know what you are reading?" Humbly the man replied: "Really, how could I ever do so, unless someone guided me?" Because Philip was associated with the true Christian congregation, he was able to answer the man's questions correctly.—Acts 8:27-38.

⁴ Today, Jehovah's Witnesses, just like Philip, are helping millions of men and women worldwide to understand the Bible. No matter what your caste, color, or creed, you too can benefit from free Bible discussions at a time convenient for you and your family. With the help of appropriate study aids, you will be able to con-



Can All Paths Lead to God?

Of the many Hindu paths today, four are considered primary: Karma (works), jnana (knowledge), Yoga (meditation), and bhakti (devotion). These different paths, it is believed, are not exclusive, but ultimately all or any one of them can lead to the same goal. How did they come about?

"The birth of the *Upanishads*, with their emphasis on knowledge and meditation, and of the *Bhakti* literature with its emphasis on love and adoration, were revolts against the formalism of the Vedic system [the path of Karma]," notes Hindu scholar K. M. Sen.—*Hinduism*, K. M. Sen, 1981, pages 45-6.

Kalidas Bhattacharyya, however, counters the view that the paths are complementary when he says: "Jñāna and karma alike reject bhakti, but bhakti is entirely indifferent to these. Jñāna, again, rejects karma."—*The Hindu Quest for the Perfection of Man*, Troy Wilson Organ, 1980, page 341.

The sages who established these new paths were searching for an acceptable one. Had they felt that each existing path was right and would lead to God, would they have felt the need to start new ones?

sider matters affecting both your faith and your loved ones. As you discover God's answers to your questions, you will feel that 'the eyes of your heart have been enlightened' and thus will find yourself drawing closer to him.—Ephesians 1:18.

Make Spiritual Progress

⁵ Some people do not like to study, and others may feel they are too old to learn. But learning about God is not burdensome if we desire to deepen our love for him. Many filmgoers who normally dislike reading often find themselves absorbed in a film-world magazine. Why? Because of their love of movies. Similarly, by reflecting on God's love for you and the privilege of serving him, you can overcome any negative feelings about reading and discussing God's Word.

⁶ Social or secular pressures can easily encroach upon time you may have set aside for discussing God's Word.



Instead of leaving your study to chance or putting it off, carefully consider its value. Because of not knowing the value of a jewel, a child who finds one will probably lose it. In contrast, a jeweler will treasure it and spend time cutting and polishing it so as to increase its value. Similarly, by making time for spiritual things, you demonstrate to God that you value his truth and will not let it slip away because of other, less-important activities. —Compare Ephesians 5:15-17.

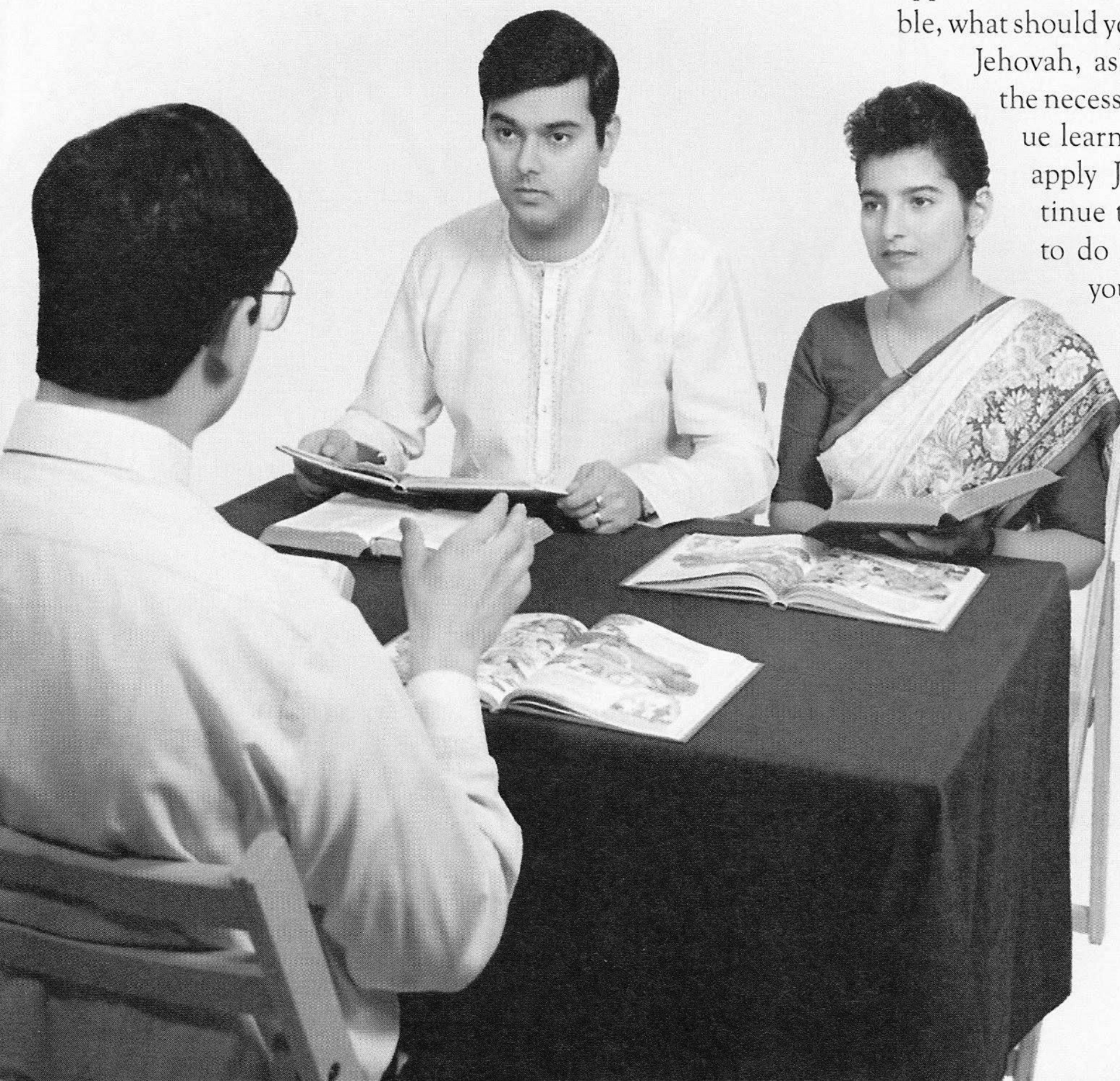
⁷ In order to grow in knowledge of truth, be careful not to spoil your spiritual appetite. The Bible is a complete and perfect guide from God and therefore needs no other sacred book to supplement it. (Psalm 19:7; 2 Timothy 3:16, 17) Instead it exhorts: “Look out: perhaps there may be someone who will carry you off as his prey through the philosophy and empty deception according to the tradition of men.” (Colossians 2:8) A person who values and loves God’s truth sees no wisdom in continuing to pursue human philosophy.

⁸ The Bible speaks of those who gather teachers “to have their ears tickled; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, whereas they will be turned aside to false stories.” (2 Timothy 4:3, 4) Like them, you too may be kept away from God’s truth if you pay attention to religious myths and legends. For this reason the Bible counsels: “Turn down the false stories which violate what is holy . . . Be training yourself with godly devotion as your aim.”—1 Timothy 4:7.

Overcoming Discouragement

⁹ Although many people claim to have a respect for truth, they do not always make a real effort to look for it. Some who do search for truth meet with discouragement from others. When you experience opposition because of examining the Bible, what should you do? Keep praying to Jehovah, asking him to give you the necessary courage to continue learning about him. Also, apply Jesus’ counsel: “Continue to love your enemies, to do good to those hating you, to bless those cursing you, to pray for those who are insulting you,” as this is the right thing to do. —Luke 6:27, 28.

¹⁰ Choosing to serve the true God, you will not be alone. You will have the backing of millions of Jehovah’s worshipers, who make up an international



The True Sanatana Religion

Hindus believe that their religion has remained unchanged since God first revealed it to man. For this reason, Hinduism in modern times is described as *sanatana*, meaning “eternal” or “ancient.” How ancient are Hindu beliefs?

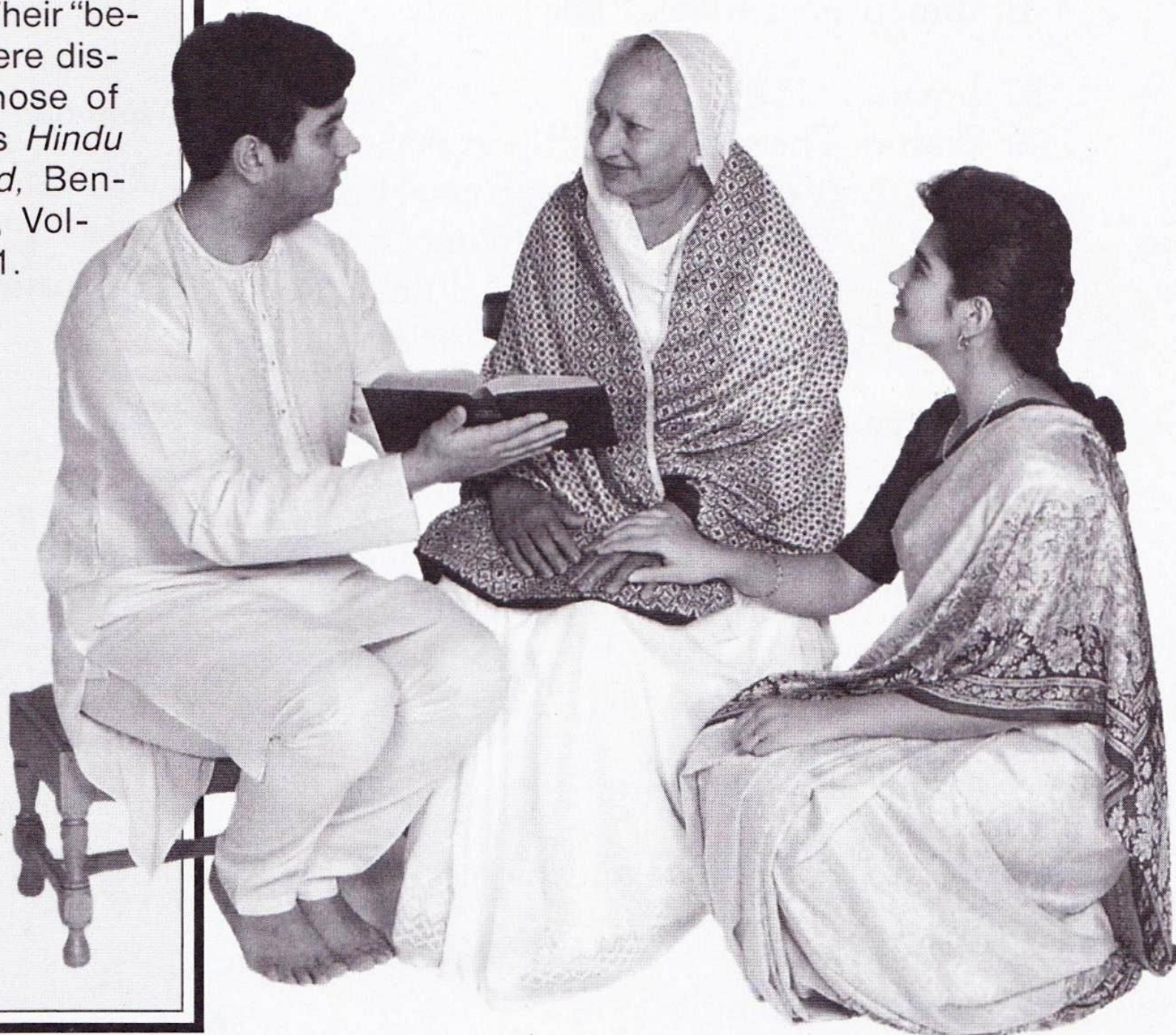
Popular Hinduism is of later origin than the Vedic religion of the days of Rama. So, as *Hindu World* notes, today “the Vedic gods have been largely abandoned, and the Vedic sacrifices are now virtually obsolete.” The ancient Vedic religion, in its turn, had developed from earlier religious teachings brought in by the Aryans when they began to settle in India. Their “beliefs and practices were distinct enough from those of later Hinduism,” adds *Hindu World*.—*Hindu World*, Benjamin Walker, 1983, Volume 2, pages 558, 561.

In the light of these facts, successive Indian generations have evidently transmitted faiths different from those of their forefathers. How, then, can we today rediscover the true divinely revealed religion? Only by identifying Sruti, God-inspired scriptures, as we have done in these closing chapters.

brotherhood. In comparison with any friends you may lose because you worship Jehovah, you will receive “a hundredfold” in the community of God’s people. (Mark 10:29, 30) All have a loving, familylike concern for your welfare. Join with them to gain strength when they meet to pray and to discuss the Bible.

¹¹ In a world in which so many people are being misled, truth is a priceless possession. Treasure it. (Matthew 7:13, 14) Knowing Bible truth enables you to demonstrate to God that you love him with your whole heart and mind. It leads you to worship God in the only way that gains his approval, which brings rich blessings.

¹² True happiness belongs to those who have the truth. Truth will open up to you the sure hope of living forever in a new world, where those who worship God in love and truth will remain forever. The nucleus of that new world already exists as the brotherhood of millions of people from all races and tongues who are now worshiping Jehovah. What a privilege for you and your family to be counted among them!—2 Peter 3:13; 1 John 2:15-17.



Glossary

Agni	God of fire	Jains	Followers of an Indian religion that is akin to Hinduism
Atharva-Veda	Hymns containing spells, charms, and remedies	Jnana	Knowledge
Avatar	A manifestation or an incarnation of a Hindu deity	Karma	The principle that every action has its good or bad consequences for the next life of the transmigrated soul
Bhagavad Gita	A part of the <i>Mahabharata</i>	Krishna	The eighth incarnation of Vishnu and the deity of the <i>Bhagavad Gita</i>
Bhakti	The path of devotion that leads to salvation	Kundalini	Occult energy said to exist in every person
Brahma	The Creator God, the principle of creation in the universe	Mahabharata	A Hindu epic containing the <i>Bhagavad Gita</i>
Brahman	A member of the priestly caste	Mandala	A diagram representing gods and their abodes
Brahman, or Brahm	The supreme, all-pervasive entity of the universe. Some Hindus view Brahman as an impersonal Divine Principle or Ultimate Reality. Also referred to as Atman	Mantra	A sacred formula, believed to have magical power, used in initiation into a sect and repeated in prayers and incantations
Dharma	An individual's duty fulfilled by observance of custom or law	Manu	Ancestor of the human race; saved from the Flood's destruction by a great fish
Epics	The <i>Ramayana</i> and the <i>Mahabharata</i> , which contain theology, rituals, moral statements, ethics, and statecraft		
Ghee	Purified butter		
Guru	A spiritual guide or teacher		
Guru Granth Sahib	Sikh holy book		

Moksha	Release from cycle of rebirth; union of the individual with the Supreme Entity, Brahman	Sikh	A follower of Guru Nanak and his nine successors
Parvati	Goddess consort of Siva	Siva	God of fertility, death, and destruction
Puranas	A class of scriptures containing Hindu mythology	Smriti	Scripture from human tradition
Radha	Consort of Krishna	Sruti	Scripture from divine revelation
Rama	The seventh incarnation of the god Vishnu and the hero of the <i>Ramayana</i>	Swami	Hindu religious teacher
Ramayana	Epic narrative relating the story of Rama	Tantra	Hindu writings containing mysticism and magic
Ravana	Archenemy of Rama in the <i>Ramayana</i>	Tilak	A sectarian mark on the forehead
Rig-Veda	Hymns in praise of Vedic deities	Upanishads	Early sacred poetic writings. A class of scriptures containing Hindu philosophy
Rishi	Hindu seer	Vedas	Earliest sacred poetic writings of Hinduism
Sama-Veda	Melodies for Vedic sacrifices	Vishnu	God as the preserver of life
Sanatana	Ancient, eternal. Hindus refer to their faith as " <i>sanatana dharma</i> ," meaning "eternal law or order"	Yajur-Veda	Priestly manual for performing sacrifices
		Yama	God of death
		Yantra	A mystical pattern believed to possess occult powers of the deity who resides in it during worship
		Yoga	Meditation or physical exercises to achieve union of self with a divine being
		Yoga Sutra	A manual on Yoga attributed to Patanjali
		Yogi	One who practices a form of Yoga

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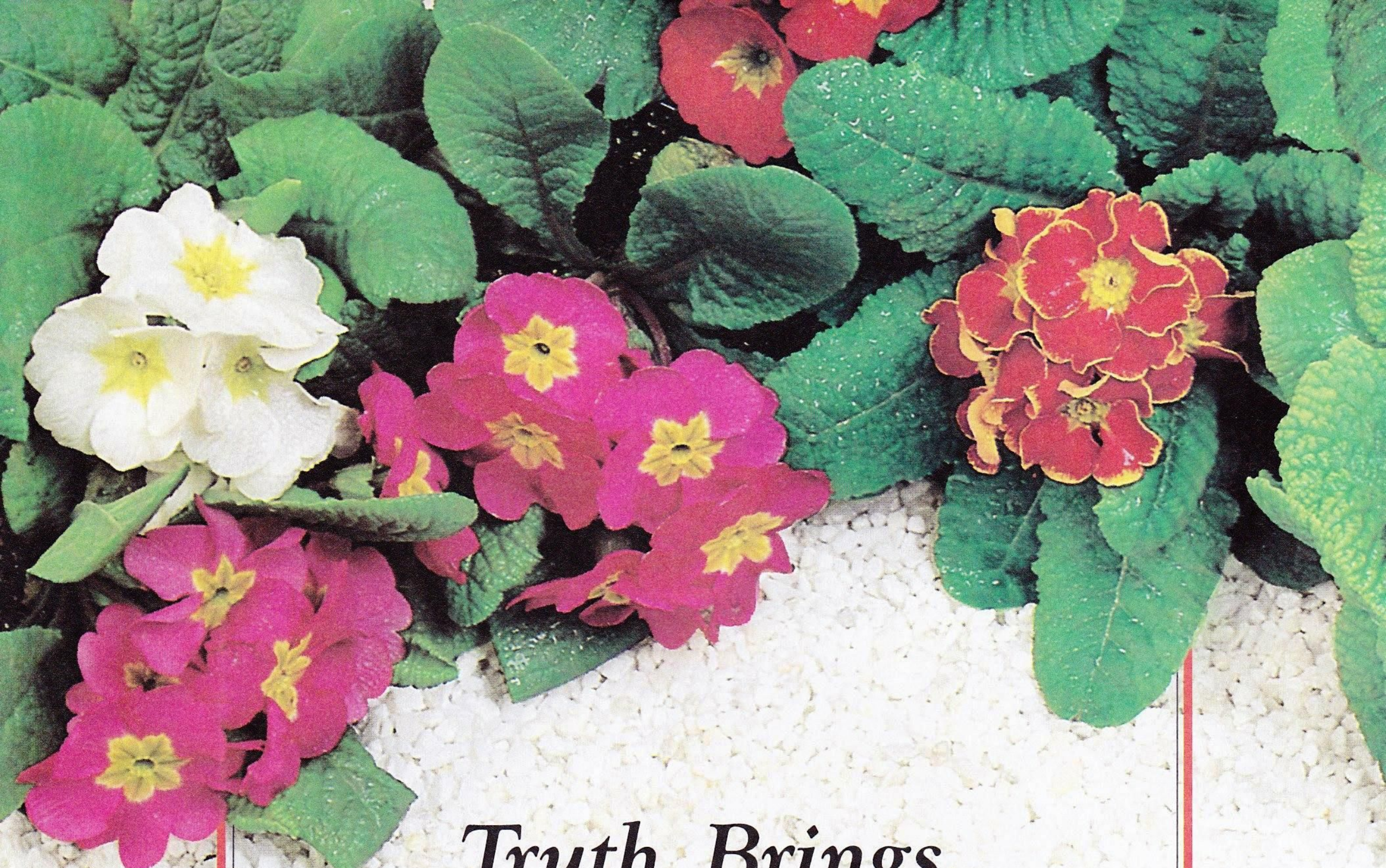
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