

[Five Questions and Answers About the Great God Siva and Those Who Worship Him](#)

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What Is the Nature of Saivite Theology?

Saivism proclaims: God Siva is Love, both immanent and transcendent, both the creator and the creation. This world is the arena of our evolution, which leads by stages to moksha, liberation from birth and death. Aum. Saivism is a unique religion in which God is both manifest and unmanifest, dual and nondual, within us and outside of us. It is not strictly pantheistic, polytheistic or monotheistic. Its predominant theology is known as monistic theism, panentheism, or Advaita Isvaravada. Monism, the opposite of dualism, is the doctrine that reality is a one whole or existence without independent parts. Theism is belief in God and the Gods, both immanent and transcendent. Saivism is monistic in its belief in a one reality and in the advaitic, or nondual, identity of man with that reality. Saivism is theistic in its belief in the Gods, and in God Siva as a loving, personal Lord, immanent in the world. Saivism expresses the oneness of Pati-pashu-pasha, God-soul-world, encompassing the nondual and the dual, faithfully carrying forth both Vedanta and Siddhanta, the pristine Sanatana Dharma of the Vedas and Saiva Agamas. The Tirumantiram states, "Shuddha Saivas meditate on these as their religious path: Oneself, Absolute Reality and the Primal Soul; the categories three: God, soul and bonds; immaculate liberation and all that fetters the soul." Aum Namah Sivaya. How Do Saivites Regard Other Faiths? Religious beliefs are

manifold and different. Saivites, understanding the strength of this diversity, wholeheartedly respect and encourage all who believe in God. They honor the fact that Truth is one, paths are many. Aum. Since the inner intent of all religions is to bind man back to God, Saivite Hindus seek not to interfere with anyone's faith or practice. We believe that there is no exclusive path, no one way for all. Saivites profoundly know that God Siva is the same Supreme Being in whom peoples of all faiths find solace, peace and liberation. Nonetheless, we realize that all religions are not the same. Each has its unique beliefs, practices, goals and paths of attainment, and the doctrines of one often conflict with those of another. Even this should never be cause for religious tension or intolerance. Saivites respect all religious traditions and the people within them. They know that good citizens and stable societies are created from groups of religious people. Saivite leaders support and participate in ecumenical gatherings with all religions. Still, Saivites defend their faith, proceed contentedly with their practices and avoid the enchantment of other ways. The Vedas explain, "Let us have concord with our own people, and concord with people who are strangers to us. Ashvins, create between us and the strangers a unity of hearts." Aum Namah Sivaya. How Does Saivism Stay Contemporary? Inner truths never change, but outer forms of practice and observance do evolve. Saivism seeks to preserve its mystical teachings while adapting to the cultural, social and technological changes of each recurrent age. Aum. Saivism is an orthodox religion, conservative in its ways and yet pliant and understanding. It is simultaneously the most demanding spiritual path and the most forgiving. Saivites have persisted through many ages through successfully adapting work, service and skills according to the times while internalizing worship and holding firmly to the eternal values. The outer form of service or occupation does not change the spiritual

search. Be he a skilled farmer, factory worker, village merchant, computer programmer or corporate executive, the Saivite is served well by his religion. Saivism has all of the facilities for the education of humankind back to the Source. Each futuristic age does not reflect a difference in the Saivite's relationship with his family, kulaguru, teacher, satguru, Gods or God in his daily religious life. The Saiva Dharma: it is now as it always was. The Vedas implore: "O self-luminous Divine, remove the veil of ignorance from before me, that I may behold your light. Reveal to me the spirit of the scriptures. May the truth of the scriptures be ever present to me. May I seek day and night to realize what I learn from the sages." Aum Namah Sivaya. What Is the Nature of Life for Saivites? To the Saivite Hindu, all of life is sacred. All of life is religion. Thus, Saivite art is sacred art, Saivite music is devotional music, and the Saivite's business is not only his livelihood, it is his service to man and God. Aum. Each Saivite is unique in his or her quest, yet all seek the same things in life: to be happy and secure, loved and appreciated, creative and useful. Saivism has an established culture which fulfills these essential human wants and helps us understand the world and our place in it. To all devotees it gives guidance in the qualities of character so necessary in spiritual life: patience, compassion, broadmindedness, humility, industriousness and devotion. Saivism centers around the home and the temple. Monastic life is its core and its power. Family life is strong and precious. Saivism possesses a wealth of art and architecture, traditions of music, art, drama and dance, and a treasury of philosophy and scholarship. Saivite temples provide worship services daily. Scriptures give ethical guidelines. Satgurus offer advanced spiritual initiation. These three-temple, scriptures and satgurus-are our pillars of faith. The Vedas implore, "O learned people, may we with our ears listen to what is beneficial, may we see with our eyes what is beneficial. May

we, engaged in your praises, enjoy with firm limbs and sound bodies, a full term of life dedicated to God." Aum Namah Sivaya. What Is the Symbolism of Siva's Dance? The symbolism of Siva Nataraja is religion, art and science merged as one. In God's endless dance of creation, preservation, destruction and paired graces is hidden a deep understanding of our universe. Aum Namah Sivaya. Nataraja, the King of Dance, has four arms. The upper right hand holds the drum from which creation issues forth. The lower right hand is raised in blessing, betokening preservation. The upper left hand holds a flame, which is destruction, the dissolution of form. The right leg, representing obscuring grace, stands upon Apasmarapurusha, a soul temporarily earth-bound by its own sloth, confusion and forgetfulness. The uplifted left leg is revealing grace, which releases the mature soul from bondage. The lower left hand gestures toward that holy foot in assurance that Siva's grace is the refuge for everyone, the way to liberation. The circle of fire represents the cosmos and especially consciousness. The all-devouring form looming above is Mahakala, "Great Time." The cobra around Nataraja's waist is kundalini shakti, the soul-impelling cosmic power resident within all. Nataraja's dance is not just a symbol. It is taking place within each of us, at the atomic level, this very moment. The Agamas proclaim, "The birth of the world, its maintenance, its destruction, the soul's obscuration and liberation are the five acts of His dance." Aum Namah Sivaya.