

## [Who is Siva?](#)

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Understanding God As He is worshiped at Kauai's Hindu Temple

God Siva is among the most mysterious, complex, compassionate and profound conceptions of the one Supreme Being to be found in the religions of mankind. He is looked upon as the Creator, Preserver and Destroyer of all existence, the Cosmic Dancer who animates the universe from within. He is honored as Pure Love, Light, Energy and Consciousness. He is contemplated as the timeless, formless and spaceless Absolute Reality. In all three of these perfections is Siva revered in Kauai's Hindu temple.

In Ways to Siva, curator Joseph Dye Lahendro wrote: "Who is Siva? What is Siva? To His devotees, Siva is everything: He is the root and support of the universe; He is the creative-destructive flow of life that rushes through it. He is motion and calm, male and female, light and dark, ascetic and lover, everything and its opposite. Siva is an ambiguous God who embodies, defines and reconciles within Himself all of life's processes and paradoxes. Siva is existence. He embodies the structure of the universe."

Living with Siva, by Sivaya Subramuniaswami, explains, "Siva dances in the atoms throughout this universe. Siva dances energetically, eternally. Siva is eternal movement. His mind is all-pervasive, and thus He sees and knows everything in all

spheres simultaneously and without effort. Siva is the Self, and He is the energy we put forth to know the Self. He is the mystery which makes us see Him as separate from us. He is the energy of life, the power in the wind. He is the dissolution called death, the peace of motionless air. He is the great force of the ocean and the stillness on a calm lake. Siva is All and in all. Our great God Siva is beyond time, beyond space, beyond form and form's creation, and yet He uses time and causes form. He is in the sky, in the clouds, in the swirling galaxies. Siva's cosmic dance of creation, preservation and dissolution is happening this very moment in every atom of the cosmos. God Siva is immanent, with a beautiful human-like form which can actually be seen and has been seen by many mystics in visions." Twenty centuries ago Rishi Tirumular, a South Indian saint, praised Siva's dance: "In all worlds He is, the Holy Lord. In darkness He is, light He is. In sun He is, in moon He is. Everywhere He is. The Lord is in all creation. None knows His coming and going. He is distant. He is near. Multiple He is. One He is. Water, earth, sky, fire and wind, the spark within the body--all these He is. He is the walking soul here below. Deathless He is."

The religion of Siva: Those who worship Lord Siva are Saivites, and their religion is called Saivite Hinduism. Saivism represents roughly half, perhaps somewhat more, of Hinduism's one billion members. It shares more common ground than differences with other denominations. Scholars tell us Saivite Hinduism is mankind's oldest religion, the venerable Sanatana Dharma. They trace its roots back 6,000 years and more to the Indus Valley civilization. But sacred writings and legend tell us that there never was a time when Saivism did not exist. Its grandeur derives from a sweet tolerance for the views of others, coupled with a practical

culture, an emphasis on personal spiritual effort and experience, the perception that God is everywhere present, and therefore no aspect of life may be divided from religion, and a joyous devotion to the one God which all men worship and which it knows as Siva, "the Auspicious One," and the knowledge that Truth lies within man himself.

The four sacred Vedas, mankind's oldest scriptures, intone, "To Rudra [Siva], Lord of sacrifice, of hymns and balmy medicines, we pray for joy and health and strength. He shines in splendor like the sun, refulgent as bright gold is He, the good, the best among the Gods (Rig Veda 43.4?5)." "He is God, hidden in all beings, their inmost soul who is in all. He watches the works of creation, lives in all things, watches all things. He is pure consciousness, beyond the three conditions of nature (Yajur Veda, Svet.U.6.11)." "There the eye goes not, nor words, nor mind. We know not. We cannot understand how He can be explained. He is above the known, and He is above the unknown (Sama Veda, Kena U. 1.3)." "Fire is His head, the sun and moon His eyes, space His ears, the Vedas His speech, the wind His breath, the universe His heart. From His feet the Earth has originated. Verily, He is the inner Self of all beings. (Atharva Veda, Mund.U. 2.1.4)."