12 Beliefs Of Saivism
Every religion has a creed of one form or another, an authoritative formulation of its beliefs. Historically, creeds have developed whenever religions migrate from their homelands. Until then, the beliefs are fully contained in the culture and taught to children as a natural part of growing up. A creed is the distillation of volumes of knowledge into a series of easy-to-remember beliefs. A creed is meant to summarize the explicit teachings or articles of faith, to imbed and thus protect and transmit the beliefs. Creeds give strength to individuals seeking to understand life and religion. Creeds also allow members of one faith to express, in elementary and consistent terms, their traditions to members of another.

Though the vast array of doctrines within Hinduism has not always been articulated in summary form, from ancient times unto today we have the well-known creedal maha vakya, "great sayings," of the Vedic Upanishads. Now, in this technological age in which village integrity is being replaced by worldwide mobility, the importance of a creed becomes apparent if religious identity is to be preserved. We need two kinds of strength—that which is found in diversity and individual freedom to inquire and that which derives from a union of minds in upholding the universal and shared principles of our faith.

Saivism is truly ageless, for it has no beginning. It is the precursor of the many-faceted religion now termed Hinduism. Scholars trace the roots of Siva worship back more than 8,000 years to the advanced Indus Valley civilization. But sacred writings tell us there never was a time when Saivism did not exist. Modern history records six main schools: Saiva Siddhanta, Pasupatism, Kashmir Saivism, Vira Saivism, Siddha Siddhanta and Siva Advaita. Saivism's grandeur and beauty are found in a practical culture, an enlightened view of man's place in the universe and a profound system of temple mysticism and yoga. It provides knowledge of man's evolution from God and back to God, of the soul's unfoldment and awakening guided by enlightened sages. Like all the sects, its majority are families, headed by hundreds of orders of swamis and sadhus who follow the fiery, world-renouncing path to moksha. The Vedas state, "By knowing Siva, who is hidden in all things, exceedingly fine, like film arising from clarified butter, the One embracer of the universe—by realizing God, one is released from all fetters."

The twelve beliefs on the following pages embody the centuries-old central convictions of Saivism, especially as postulated in Saiva Siddhanta, one of the six schools of Saivism. They cover the basic beliefs about God, soul and world, evil and love and more. On the last page is a glossary of words used in the twelve beliefs.
Belief One
REGARDING GOD’S UNMANIFEST REALITY
Siva’s followers all believe that Lord Siva is God, whose Absolute Being, Parasiva, transcends time, form and space. The yogi silently exclaims, “It is not this. It is not that.” Yea, such an inscrutable God is God Siva. Aum.

Belief Two
REGARDING GOD’S MANIFEST NATURE OF ALL-PERVADING LOVE
Siva’s followers all believe that Lord Siva is God, whose immanent nature of love, Parashakti, is the substratum, primal substance or pure consciousness flowing through all form as energy, existence, knowledge and bliss. Aum.

Belief Three
REGARDING GOD AS PERSONAL LORD AND CREATOR OF ALL
Siva’s followers all believe that Lord Siva is God, whose immanent nature is the Primal Soul, Supreme Mahadeva, Paramesvara, author of Vedas and Agamas, the creator, preserver and destroyer of all that exists. Aum.

Belief Four
REGARDING THE ELEPHANT-FACED DEITY
Siva’s followers all believe in the Mahadeva Lord Ganesha, son of Siva-Shakti, to whom they must first supplicate before beginning any worship or task. His rule is compassionate. His law is just. Justice is His mind. Aum.

Belief Five
REGARDING THE DEITY KARTTIKEYA
Siva’s followers all believe in the Mahadeva Karttikeya, son of Siva-Shakti, whose vel of grace dissolves the bondages of ignorance. The yogi, locked in lotus, venerates Murugan. Thus restrained, his mind becomes calm. Aum.

Belief Six
REGARDING THE SOUL’S CREATION AND IDENTITY WITH GOD
Siva’s followers all believe that each soul is created by Lord Siva and is identical to Him, and that this identity will be fully realized by all souls when the bondage of anava, karma and maya is removed by His grace. Aum.
Belief Seven

REGARDING THE GROSS, SUBTLE AND CAUSAL PLANES OF EXISTENCE

Siva’s followers all believe in three worlds: the gross plane, where souls take on physical bodies; the subtle plane, where souls take on astral bodies; and the causal plane, where souls exist in their self-effulgent form. Aum.

Belief Ten

REGARDING THE GOODNESS OF ALL

Siva’s followers all believe there is no intrinsic evil. Evil has no source, unless the source of evils seeming be ignorance itself. They are truly compassionate, knowing that ultimately there is no good or bad. All is Siva’s will. Aum.

Belief Eight

REGARDING KARMA, SAMSRARA AND LIBERATION FROM REBIRTH

Siva’s followers all believe in the law of karma—that one must reap the effects of all actions he has caused—and that each soul continues to reincarnate until all karmas are resolved and moksha, liberation, is attained. Aum.

Belief Eleven

REGARDING THE ESOTERIC PURPOSE OF TEMPLE WORSHIP

Siva’s followers all believe that religion is the harmonious working together of the three worlds and that this harmony can be created through temple worship, wherein the beings of all three worlds can communicate. Aum.

Belief Nine

REGARDING THE FOUR MARGAS, STAGES OF INNER PROGRESS

Siva’s followers all believe that the performance of charya, virtuous living, kriya, temple worship, and yoga, leading to Parasiva through the grace of the living satguru, is absolutely necessary to bring forth jnana, wisdom. Aum.

Belief Twelve

REGARDING THE FIVE LETTERS

Siva’s followers all believe in the Panchakshara Mantra, the five sacred syllables “Namasiyay,” as Saivism’s foremost and essential mantra. The secret of Namasiyay is to hear it from the right lips at the right time. Aum.
The Four Stages of Salivism

The path of enlightenment is divided naturally into four stages or paddas: charya, virtue and selfless service; kriya, spiritual effort; sanyasa, renunciation; and moksha: the state of enlightened wisdom reached toward the path ends as a result of Self Realization through the Gurus grace. These four paddas are quite similar to the four yogas of Vedanta, karma yoga, bhakti yoga, jnana yoga and kriya yoga. However, there is one key difference. Whereas in Vedanta each yoga is taught as a step on the path toward the Vedas, in Salivism we need to pass through all four paddas in the Saiva Siddhanta school of Salivism to reach Self Realization.

Let’s see why the path of life is rocks across a shallow stream: Vedanta gives us four separate rock paths to choose from, one for each of the four yogas, all of which lead across the river which consists of four stages: charya, kriya, yoga and jnana.

The four stages are not alternative ways, but progressive, cumulative phases of a one path, much like the natural development of a butterfly from egg to caterpillar, from caterpillar to pupa, and then finally to a beautifully colored butterfly. The last stages are what each human soul must pass through in many births to attain its final goal of moksha, freedom from rebirth. In the beginning stages, we suffer until we learn. Learning leads us to service; and selfless service is the beginning of spiritual striving. Service leads us to understanding. Understanding leads us to meditate deeply and without distractions. Finally meditation leads us to surrender to God. This is the straight and certain path, the San Marga, leading to Self Realization, the utmost purpose of life.

Glossary

The following definitions are simple descriptions of words used in the twelve preceding beliefs.

**Absolute Reality:** The timeless, formless, spaceless, unchanging and transcendent God Siva—Parasiva. It is the Self God, the essence of all.

**Agama:** An enormous collection of ancient Sanskrit scriptures. The Vedas are the major source of Agama in the Saiva Siddhanta school of Saivism.

**Ananda:** One who experiences bliss.

**Aaranyaka:** A type of ancient Indian religious literature.

**Aatmalinga:** The innermost purpose of life.

**Asrutha:** A giver of grace.

**Bhakti:** A gift from God given out of His love.

**Bhakti Yoga:** Yoga which is done wholeheartedly for God and God alone, not for selfish reasons.

**Brahma:** The self-effulgent: That which can only be understood through direct experience.

**Charya:** The first stage of religiousness and the foundation for the next three stages. It is also called the dasa marga, straight and certain path, the San Marga, leading to Self Realization, and perfection through the practice of yoga.

**Citta:** Yoga, “union,” is the process of uniting with God within oneself, a stage arrived at through perfecting charya and kriya. God is now like a friend to us. This system of inner discovery begins with asana, sitting quietly on a yoga mat, breath control, pratayahara, sense withdrawal, brings awareness into dharana, which is the state of a thought, mental focus. Over the years, under ideal conditions, the kundalini fire of consciousness ascends to the higher chakras, burning the dross of ignorance and past karmas, until it reaches the mahat maya or divine level of consciousness. At this point, a grace: A gift from God given out of His love. Lord Siva revealing grace is how soul awareness leads one to oneness with God. A grace is a mental Faculty to the universe. The physical world. See: three worlds.

**Ganesha:** Lord of the Ganesha lineages. Ganas are the benevolent elephant-faced Deity homes of the Hindu gods. He is the Lord of Obstacles, revered for His great wisdom and invoked first before any undertaking. He is the friend of each soul’s karma and the perfect partner of dharma. Pristine Ganesha, or Ganesha bhakti, is the school that deals with all of God’s doings. It is the Self God, the essence of all.

**Glossary:** The state of innermost peace.

**Jnana:** That which cannot be categorized or measured. The final mental category of the mind.

**jnani:** A perfect master. He is the liberator one; the jnanamukta, the epitome of kaivalya—perfect freedom—far-seeing, self-realized. He is what we are. Each time we soar into Parasiva and come out a jnani, a knower. Each time we soar into Parasiva and come out a jnani, a knower. Each time we soar into Parasiva and come out a jnani, a knower. Each time we soar into Parasiva and come out a jnani, a knower. Each time we soar into Parasiva and come out a jnani, a knower. Each time we soar into Parasiva and come out a jnani, a knower. Each time we soar into Parasiva and come out a jnani, a knower.

**Jnana Pada:** The fourth of the four stages we go through to realize God. The stage of good conduct where one learns to live according to dharma and serve others.

**Karma:** The inmost purpose of life.

**karma:** The state of innermost peace.

**Karma Yoga:** Yoga (selfless service) and bhakti yoga (devotional practices).

**Kundalini:** The subtle energy and cosmic energy within every individual.

**Madhi:** The experience of God as Parasiva, timeless, formless, spaceless.

**Moksha:** Liberation, The release from the cycle of births and deaths, after karma has been resolved and God Realization attained.

**Paramaksharaha Mantra:** The five-lettered chant. Namah Sivaya. The foremost mantra for Saivites. It means “Praise to Siva,” and appears in Tapir Veda.

**Paramarthik:** The Name of Lord Siva as the Supreme Mahadeva, origin of the universe. Siva as a person—who has a body, with head, arms and legs—who acts, wills, blesses, gives darsana, guides, creates, preserves, reabsorbs, obscurbs and envelopes.

**Parasiva:** Supreme power: primary energy. God Siva as the energy and consciousness beyond all three worlds. Lord Siva, the uncreated, original, perfect God. The first soul, source of all other souls. Source of Siva.

**Pratayahara:** Sense withdrawal, brings awareness into dharana, the concentration of the Divine overcoming the instinctive-intellectual mind. We now look upon the Destiny image not just as a carved stone, but as the living presence of the God. We perform ritual and pujas not because we have to but because we want to. We are drawn to the temple to satisfy our longings. We sing joyfully. We absorb and intuit the wisdom of the Vedas, we understand and accept.

**Panchakshara Mantra:** The five-lettered chant. Namah Sivaya. The forefront mantra for Saivites. It means “Praise to Siva,” and appears in Tapir Veda.

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