

Shri Trimbakeshwar
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Shri Trimbakeshwar is a Temple dedicated to Lord Shiva. It is one of the Twelve Jyotirlingas of India. The following lists the twelve Jyotirlingas of India:-

1. Somanatha in Saurashtra [Somnath, Gujarat]
2. Mallikarjuna on Shrishaila [Srisailem, Andhra-Pradesh]
3. Mahakala at Ujjayini [Ujjain, Madhya-Pradesh]
4. Omkara at Amreshvara [island in Narmada River, near Mandhatta, Madhya-Pradesh.]
5. Kedara in Himalaya [source of Mandakini River, Uttaraanchala]
6. Bhimashankara at Dakini [source of Bhima River, Maharashtra]
7. Vishveshvara at Varanasi [Uttar-Pradesh]
8. Tryambaka on Gautami [source of Godavari River, Maharashtra]
9. Vaidyanatha at Citabhumii [Deoghar, Jharkhand]
10. Nagesha at Dvarakavana [near Dwarka, Gujarat]
11. Rameshvara at Setubandha [Ramesvaram, Tamil Nadu]
12. Ghushnesha at Shivalaya [Ellora, Maharashtra]

The Jyotirling is so called because the spiritually advanced souls can see a shaft of light (Jyoti) coming from the heavens into the earth.

This temple is located {at N19°55'55.9"; E73°31'51.3" at an altitude of 711 meters} in the small town of Trimbakeshwar, it is about 28 Km from the city of Nashik. State Transport busy ply every 30 minutes to this town. The present temple was built by Nanasaheb Peshwas, its construction commenced in the year 1752 AD. Consequently royal families like the Holkars and the Gaikwads have supported the temple.

A massive set of stone fortifications protects the temple. A generous forecourt and compound provides the backdrop for the actual shrine. The pillars and walls of the temple are anointed with carvings. There is a Nandi idol in front of the shrine. Unlike the conventional Shiva temple, this shrine does not have a Shivalinga. Instead, there is a hollow, which contains three small lingas representing the Trinity Bramha, Vishnu and Mahesh.

This place is also a very important place for pilgrimage because it is the site of Kumbha mela. Esoterically, it is taught that the kumbha represents the sahasrara chakra the force center at the top of the head. The amrit (nectar) that it holds symbolizes the divine consciousness, which is the true source of immortality. The Kumbha Mela(fair) takes place every four years in rotation at Haridwar, Prayag (Allahabad), Nashik and Ujjain, according to the position of Jupiter in the Zodiac.

Lord Shiva, the king of yogis, is the ultimate god in the Hindu pantheon. Being the ultimate does not mean he is all the more inaccessible, infact he is called Bholenath (one who grants wishes easily) or the simpleton God , he symbolise divine compassion. The Shiva Sahasraname list the one thousand names of Lord Shiva, they represent the various aspect of Lord Shiva. He is mostly depicted as a three dimensional gaussian curve{Shiv Linga} and this abstraction mathematically embodies the male {static} and female {dynamic} aspect of the absolute God. So also he is show as a male and a female in many of the pieces of Art. He and goddess Parvati resides on earth at the Mt Kailash, this mountain is in present day China. This Mountain is sacred to Hindus, Buddhist and Jains. It is the source of four major river of South East Asia, the Karnali (a tributary to the Ganga), the Indus, the Bramaputra and the Sutlej. Thus he is shown with Ganga flowing into his hair locks.

One of the most important pilgrimage points for Lord Shiva is the city of Varanasi (Here the two tributaries of Ganga, Varan and Asi meet.). The main temple here is of Vishwanath (God of the Cosmos), which is also a Jyotir Linga. This place was also known as Kashi, which means destruction. It symbolises the destruction of the sins of an individual and allows for there spiritual upliftment. This city is considered so holy that even when the dissolution of the entire world takes place, Lord Shiva protects it. This very city is then used to create the next universe. It is a fact that Varanasi is a very old city.

One of the important mantras dedicated to Lord Shiva is:-

Om Namah Shivay.

This mantra is literally a homage to Lord Shiva by calling his name, but it essentially means:-

"I bow to the Inner Self"

Because Shiva denotes divine Consciousness, the Inner Self that is present in everyone.

There is another matra which is also dedicated to Lord Shiva and is very beneficial, it is called as the Maha Mrityunjaya Mantra. It is as follows:-

Om Trayambakam Yajamahe, Sugandhim Pushtimvardanam,

Urvaarukamiva Bandhanaan, Mrityor Mukshiya Maamritaam

MEANING:

"We worship the Three - Eyed One (Lord Shiva), who is fragrant and nourishes well all beings. May He liberate us from death for the sake of Immortality, even as the cucumber is severed from its bondage to the creeper".