

# **Dwadasa jyothir linga stothram** **(Prayer to the twelve resplendent lingas)**

**By**  
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(Jyotirling or Jyotirlingam is a shrine where is worshipped in the form of a *Jyotirlingam* or "lingam of light." There are twelve traditional Jyotirlinga shrines in India. It is believed that Shiva first manifested himself as a Jyotirlinga on the night of the Arudra festival, thus the special reverence for the Jyotirlinga. It is believed that a person can see these lingas as columns of fire piercing through the earth after he reaches a higher level of spiritual attainment. The location of these Lingas of light is given in another prayer called:-

Dwadasa Linga Sthavam.

Sourashtre Somanadham, cha Sri Shaile Mallikarjunam,  
Ujjayinyam Maha Kalam, Omkaram, amaleshwaram,  
Paralyam Vaidyanatham, cha Dakinyam Bhimasankaram,  
Sethubandhe thu Ramesam, Nagesam thu Darukavane,  
Varanasyam thu Viswesam, Trayambakam Gouthami thate,  
Himalaye thu Kedaram, Ghushmesam cha Shivalaye,  
Ethani Jyothirlingani sayam pratha paden nara,  
Saptha janma krutham papam smaranena vinasathi.

The twelve Lingas of light are,  
Somanatha in Sourashtra,  
Mallikarjuna in Sri Shailam,  
Mahakala in Ujjain,  
Omkaram in Amaleshwara,  
Vaidhyanatha in Parali,  
Bhimasankara in South,  
Rameshwara near the bridge in Sethu,  
Nageswara in Daruka forest,  
Visweswara in Varnasi,  
Trayambakeshwara in the shores of Godavari,  
Kedareshwara in Himalayas,

And Ghushmesha in Sivalaya.  
He who remembers them ,  
Morning and evening,  
Would wash away sins ,  
Committed in his seven births.)

**Sourashtra dese Visadhethi ramye,  
Jyothirmayam Chandra kalavathamsam,  
Bhakthi pradhanaya krupavatheernam,  
Tham Soma nadham saranam prapadhye.**

**1**

I seek refuge of the Soma Nadha,  
Who is in the holy and pretty Sourashtra,  
Who is dazzling with light,  
Who wears the crescent of the moon,  
Who has come there to give ,  
The gift of devotion and mercy.

The Somnath temple is dedicated to Someshwara, another name of Lord Shiva with moon on his head. The temple is situated in Saurashtra in a place called Prabhas Pattan near the port of Veravel. It is believed that the Moon God himself had originally built the temple out of gold. Somnath is the first of all the 12 jyotirlingas. The Somnath temple has been destroyed six times and has been rebuilt. Last time it was after independence. The temple faces the east direction.

**Sri Shaila sange vibhudathi sange,  
Thulathi thune api mudha vasantham,  
Thamarjunam mallika poorvamekam,  
Namami samsara samudhra sethum.**

**2**

I salute him who is the bridge to the ocean of life,  
Who is in the company of all gods,  
And living in the union of Sri Shaila,  
Who resides on the peak of Thula,  
And who is called Mallikarjuna,

The Sri Shailam Temple located in Kurnool district. Sri Shailam is a small city situated in the densely forested Nallamalai hills. This temple is considered very holy and is dedicated to Mallikarjuna Swamy and Bhramaramba. One unique feature of the temple is that all the devotees who visit the temple are allowed to touch the idol which is not prevalent in any other temple in South India. According to popular legends, Adhi Shankara had composed his famous Sivananda Lahiri here It is also

believed that Goddess Durga had taken the form of a bee and worshiped Lord Shiva here and selected this holy place as her abode.

**Avanthikayam vihithavatharam,  
Mukthi pradhanaya cha sajjananam,  
Akalamruthyo parirakshanatham,  
Vande maha kala maha suresam.**

**3**

**I salute that Maha Kala,  
Who is the lord of all devas,  
Who has incarnated in the city of Avanthi,  
For giving salvation to good people,  
And to save people from untimely death.**

Mahakaleshwar Jyotirlinga Temple is situated in Ujjain, the historical capital of Central India. This Temple is situated near a lake. The idol in the temple is known as Dakshinamurti, facing the south and is white in colour. Among the 12 Jyotirlingas, the Mahakal Jyotirlinga is believed to be swayambhu, meaning 'born of itself'. The Mahakaleshwar temple is made in five levels, one of which is underground.. The underground sanctum is lightened by brass lamps. The prasada in the temple can be re-offered unlike other temples. According to the legends, a demon called Dushana tormented the people of Avanti and then Lord Shiva appeared from the ground and rescued the people and then on the request of the people, Lord Shiva permanently settled there as Mahakaleshwar Jyotirlinga.

**Kavaerika narmadhayo pavithre,  
Samagame sajjana tharanaya,  
Sadaiva mandha tripure vasantham,,  
Onkameesam shivameka meede.**

**4**

**I meditate only on Shiva,  
With the form of the letter Om,  
Who lives In the city of Mandhatripura,  
Which is in the holy confluence  
Of rivers Cauvery and Narmadha,  
For helping good people cross ,  
The Ocean of the misery of life.**

Lord Omkareshwara or Amaleshwara temple is located in an island on the banks of the Narmada, is located on the Mandhata hill in Madhya Pradesh. The Omkareshwar Jyotirlinga shrine and the Amareshwar temple is one of the 12 revered Jyotirlinga shrines of Shiva. The river Narmada branches into two which forms an island Mandhata or Shivapuri in the center. Ironically, the island's shape resembles the visual representation of the Omkara sound, Om. The temple can be

reached by ferry. As per the legend, Vindhya mountain once prayed to Lord Shiva or Omkareshwara and got blessed in return. Other story says that the Shivalinga was split into two upon the request of the Devas. Thus, the formation of Omkareshwara and Amareshwar.

**Poorvothare prajjwalika nidhane,  
Sada vasantham girija sametham,  
Surasuradhitha pada padmam,  
Sri Vaidyanatham tham aham namami.**

**5**

**I salute that Vaidyanatha,  
Whose lotus feet are worshipped,  
By all asuras and devas,  
And who lives in place of eternal shine,  
In the north east of India,  
Along with his consort Parvathi.**

Vaidhyanath is located at Deogarh in the Santal Parganas area of Bihar. Deogarh is also known as Vaidyanath. The temple faces the east. The top of the Shiva Lingam is slightly broken which as per the legend happened when Ravana tried to uproot it. Sivaganga lake is positioned just near the temple. While the Chandrakooa well found near the main entrance is said to have been filled with water by Ravana from several thirthams. The Shiva's temple is almost 72 feet tall in the form of a lotus. There are three ascending shaped gold vessels on the top. Then there is a 'Punchsula' as well as an eight petalled lotus jewel called 'Chandrakanta Mani'. According to mythology, Ravana meditated hard to invoke Lord Shiva. In his desire to become invincible, he attempted to lift Lord Shiva's abode, Mount Kailash. The act offended the Lord. He punished him but with Ravana pleading for mercy, he left him on one condition. He gave him one of the twelve lingas which were not supposed to be kept on ground in any case. But Ravana's promise gave way in front of nature's call & kept the linga on the ground. In order to rectify the mistake, Ravana started cutting off nine of his heads as a part of his repentance. Shiva was pleased by this & he joined the heads again to the body. Worshipping Vaidhyanath Jyotirlinga is considered to eliminate one's all worries and miseries. It even imparts salvation.

**Yaamyē sadange nagare adhi rāmye,  
Vibhooshithangam vividaischa bhogai,  
Sad bhakthi mukthi prada meesa mekam,  
Sri Naganatham saranam prapadhye.**

**6**

**I seek refuge of Lord Naganatha,  
Who lives in the pretty town  
Of Sadanga in the southern part,  
Who is well decorated,  
Who grants all kinds of pleasures,**

**And who is the only God who grants,  
Devotion and salvation..**

The temple is located between Dwarka and Dwarka Island in Gujarat on the coast of Surat. The Jyotirlinga in the temple is known as Nageshwar Mahadev. The temple is being visited by thousands of pilgrims every year. The Jyotirlinga situated in the temple is considered to protect everybody from all sorts of poisons. It is believed that one who offers prayers in the temple becomes poison free.

**Mahadri parswe cha thate ramantham,  
Sampoojyamanam sathatham muneendrai,  
Surasurair yaksha mahoraghadyai,  
Kedarameesam shivameka meede.**

**7**

**I meditate on Shiva who is the Lord of Kedara,  
Who takes pleasure in the valley of the great mountain,  
Who is always worshipped by great sages,  
And also devas, asuras, yakshas and nagas.**

Kedarnath is a Hindu holy town located in the Indian state of Uttaranchal. And is the northern most Jyothirlinga. The place is located at an altitude of 3,584 m and at the origin of the river Mandakini, The place is accessible after a steep 13 km trek over a paved path from Gaurikund. Rishikesh, Haridwar, The credit for the construction of this heavenly temple is given to the Pandavas. According to the saying it is believed that the Pandavas came to Lord Shiva to seek blessings to atone their sins after the battle of Mahabharata. Lord Shiva evaded them continuously and took refuge in Kedarnath in the form of a Bull. On being chased, Lord Shiva left his hump behind. This conical protrusion is worshiped in the temple. The temple is located on the Rudra Himalaya range, also known as the Pancha Parvata. It is believed that four of the Pandavas died on one of the peaks, Swargarohini.

**Sahyadri seershe vimale vasantham,  
Godavari theera pavithra dese,  
Yad darsanal pathakamasu nasam,  
Prayathi tham Traimbaka me esa meede.**

**8**

**I meditate on the lord of Triambaka,  
Who lives on the peak of western ghats,  
In the holy shores of river Godavari,  
And who destroys all sins,  
Of his devotees who see him.**

Tryambakeshwar is one of the 12 Jyotirlinga shrines situated 30 km from Nasik in Maharashtra. Considered to be the birth place of the river Godavari, the shrine's beauty is still well intact .A small Shivalingam or Tryambaka, is placed amidst a spacious courtyard & the sanctum which is crowned with a graceful tower, a giant amalaka(goose berry) and a golden kalasha. The Shivalingam is situated in a depression on the floor of the sanctum. Continuous flow of water from the top of the Shivalingam adds to the mystic beauty. Shivalingam is generally covered with a silver mask which is then substituted with a golden mask with five faces on festive occasions. These faces have their respective golden crowns. While, the silver mask is similar to the processional images seen in South Indian temples.

**Suthamra varnee jala rasi yoge,  
Nibhadhya sethum visikhaira sankyai,  
Sri ramachandrna samarpitham tham,  
Ramesamakhyam niyatham smarami.**

**9**

**I meditate with devotion the lord of Rama,  
Who lives in the confluence of river,  
Thamravarnee with the sea,  
Where a bridge has been built.  
With the help of umpteen arrows,  
By the Lord Sri Rama Chandra.**

The Rameshwar Jyotirlinga is considered as the southern most Jyotirlingams of India. According to belief , it was installed there by Lord Rama after his return from Sri Lanka. Since Ravana was a Brahmin, Rama got Brahma hathi dosha and to get rid of it, he installed and worshipped Shiva. The Lord is known as Ramanatha .The temple is situated on an island located on the south eastern coast of Tamil nadu. It is believed that the ancient shrine was a thatched hut till it was rebuilt in the 12<sup>th</sup> century by Parakrama Bahu of Sri Lanka.. The rest of the temple was completed by the Sethupathy rulers of Ramanathapuram.. There are 36 Theerthams meaning water springs in Rameshwaram out of which 22 are situated in the temple.

**Yam dakini sakinika samaje,  
Nishevyanam pisithasanaischa,  
Sadaiva bheemadhi pada prasidham,  
Tham shnkaram bhaktha hitham namami.**

**10**

**I salute that Lord Sankara  
Who is the darling of his devotees,  
Who is being worshipped by rakshasas,  
In the company of Ghosts called Dakini and Sakini,  
And who is well known as “Bheema”.**

This temple is located near Pune of Maharashtra on the shores of river Bhima. And is located on a high peak, surrounded by thick dense forests. The shrine Bhimashankaram, dates back to the 13th century. Lord Shiva's killing of the demon Tripurasura is the main legend associated with the temple. It even states that Shiva took abode on the Sahyadri hills in the form of a Bhima upon the request of the Gods, on the crest of the Sahyadri hills. The sweat of Shiva poured after the battle ultimately led to the origin of Bhimarathi river.

**Sayanda mananda vane vasantham,  
Mananda kandam hatha papa vrundam,  
Varanasi nadha manadha nadham,  
Sri Viswanadham saranam prapadhye.**

**11**

I seek the protection of the Lord of universe,  
Who lives is happily in the forest of joy,  
Who is the basis of all happiness,  
Who destroys all accumulated sins,  
Who is the lord of the city of Varanasi,  
And who is the lord of all who do not have anybody.

This temple holiest of the holies to any Hindu is situated in the banks of the holy river Ganga in Varanasi. The temple has been destroyed several times by invaders but has been rebuilt every time. It is believed the priests of the temple have sacrificed their all several times to preserve the holy Lingam. The present temple has been built by Ahalyabhai, a Maharashtrian queen.

**Ilapure ramya visalake asmin,  
Samullasantham cha jagad varenyam,  
Vande maha dhara thara swabhavam,  
Ghusruneswarakhyam saranam prapadhye.**

**12**

I seek the refuge of Ghusraneswara,  
Who lives and plays in the pretty city of Ilapura,  
Who is the greatest among the universe,  
And who is by his nature extremely kind.

The Grishneshwar Jyotirlinga Temple is one of the ancient and holiest shrines of India.. The temple is located at a distance of 11km from Daulatabad near Aurangabad in Maharashtra. Daulatabad was once known as Devagiri. Ahilyabhai Holkar constructed the Grishneshwar Temple,. Grishneshwar is also known as Ghushmeswara. According to legend, a devotee called Kusuma worshiped Lord Shiva by immersing a Shivalingam everyday in a nearby tank. Kusuma's husband's first wife out of jealousy because of Kusuma's piety in the society killed her son. An aggrieved Kusuma continued her daily ritual and when she dipped the Shivlingam

in the tank her son miraculously revived. From then on the people started worshipping Lord Shiva in the form of a Jyotirlinga Ghusmeshwar.

**Jyothir maya dwadasa linga kanam,  
Shivathmanam prokthamidham kramena,  
Sthothram padithwa manujo athi bhakthyo,  
Phalam thadalokye nijam bhajescha.**

**13**

**This prayer which tells about,  
The twelve resplendent lingas,  
If read with devotion by men,  
Would make them be worshipped by others.**

**(I acknowledge my gratitude to different web sites for the write up on the different Jyothirlingas.)**