STUDY NOTES · BASIC CONCEPT

Read all about the Significance of Srisailam Devasthanam Temple, Andhra pradesh

Art & Culture

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WHAT?

Srisailam Devasthanam refers to the sacred temple complex in Srisailam, Andhra Pradesh, dedicated to Lord Mallikarjuna Swamy (a form of Lord Shiva) and Goddess Bhramaramba Devi (a form of Goddess Parvati). It is one of the most revered pilgrimage sites in Hinduism, known for its profound spiritual, mythological, and historical importance. Nestled in the Nallamala Hills along the Krishna River, it is often called "Southern Kashi" by devotees.

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Key Religious Significance

- One of the 12 Jyotirlingas — Mallikarjuna Swamy is the second of the 12 sacred Jyotirlingas (self-manifested lingams of Lord Shiva) mentioned in the Shiva Purana. These are considered supreme manifestations of Shiva's divine light and energy.
- One of the 18 Maha Shakti Peethas — The Bhramaramba Devi shrine is the 6th (or sometimes listed as the 2nd/primary in some traditions) among the 18 major Shakti Peethas, where parts of Goddess Sati's body are believed to have fallen according to legend. It symbolizes the supreme feminine divine power (Shakti).
- Unique Dual Status — Srisailam is the only temple in India where a Jyotirlinga (Shiva) and a Shakti Peetha (Shakti/Parvati) coexist in the same premises under one roof. This rare confluence represents the perfect union of Shiva (consciousness) and Shakti (energy/power), making it exceptionally sacred for both Shaivism (Shiva worship) and Shaktism (Goddess worship).
- Also a Paadal Petra Sthalam — It is one of the 275 sacred Shiva temples glorified in the Tamil Saiva Nayanar hymns (6th–9th century CE), adding to its ancient devotional legacy.

Mythological & Spiritual Importance

- Legend of the Name — Lord Shiva chose Srisailam as his favorite abode (after Kailash) when asked by Parvati. The name "Mallikarjuna" comes from "Mallika" (jasmine flower) and "Arjuna" (a tree), as Shiva appeared here under a jasmine-laden Arjuna tree to bless devotees.
- Shakti Peetha Legend — According to the Daksha Yagna story, when Sati immolated herself, her neck (or other parts in variants) fell here, making it a powerful Shakti Peetha where Goddess Bhramaramba (in the form of a bee—"Bhramara") resides.
- Spiritual Power — Devotees believe visiting Srisailam absolves sins, grants moksha (liberation), removes karmic obstacles, and bestows prosperity, protection, and fulfillment of wishes. It is especially auspicious for couples, as it symbolizes divine marital harmony between Shiva and Parvati.

Historical & Cultural Significance

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- Ancient references date back to Puranas, Skanda Purana, and Srisaila Khandam. The site has been a pilgrimage center for thousands of years.
- Ruled and patronized by dynasties like Rashtrakutas, Chalukyas, Kakatiyas, Reddy kings, Vijayanagara, and Hoysalas—who built structures, donated villages, and developed the temple.
- It holds great archaeological value with intricate carvings, gopurams, mandapams (e.g., Veerasiro Mandapam), and the sacred Patalaganga (Krishna River spot).

Why It Matters Today

- Millions of devotees visit annually for darshan, especially during festivals like Maha Shivaratri, Ugadi, and Karthika Masam.
- The temple complex includes sub-shrines, sacred spots like Sikhareswara Temple (highest point), and natural beauty in the forest reserve.
- It is managed by the Srisaila Devasthanam trust, with online booking for darshan, sevas, and accommodations.