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PRADOSHA PURANAM -
Details of Pradosha Purana, - how Lord Shiva, the most Compassionate, decided to drink the poison to save world

Pradosha pooja is one of the most sacred and important according to PRADOSHA PURANA.

Once the gods (*Devas*) and the demons (*Asuras*) were churning the milky ocean with the help of *Vasuki*, the serpent king, hoping to extract amrtam (*nectar*) from the *Kseerabthi* (*milk ocean*). *Vasuki* who was employed as a rope for churning, endured severe abrasions and strangulation. Thereupon, she spewed *halahalam*, a potent dark poison capable of destroying the worlds. Threatened by the scorching venom, the celestials fled in great horror. *Brahma* took to His heels. *Vishnu's* bluish body darkened further. *Indra* could not be seen. *Agni*, the fire god, could not bear the raging heat. *Yama* ran amuck in all directions. *Varuna* became unconscious, *Kubera* fled. Hosts of *siddhas*, *Caranas*, *Gandharvas*, *Yakshas* and *Maharshis* went to *Kailasa* and sought the Lord's feet as refuge.

God Shiva was moved with pity at their plight and was overcome with compassion by their prayers. Soon He bade *Sundara* for a prompt intervention, who then rushed to the ocean, collected the all-pervasive poison and holding it in his hand as a small *jambu* fruit, returned to *Kailasa*. The Lord became exceedingly happy after seeing it. He showed it to *Girija* and gave the title 'Halahala' to *Sundara*, who thenceforth came to be known as *Halahala Sundara*. Thereupon, the Lord accepted the *Halahala* pellet from his hand and, with the loving permission of Universal Mother, swallowed it. By goddess *Uma's* command, the pellet froze in the Lord's throat, painting it blue and becoming an embellishment, gave Him the name *NilakanTa*. [It is also a common practice for womanhood to worship Goddess *Parvathi* for long life of Husbands as She is having 'Maangalya Baagyam' and could turn the poison into nectar].

On *Trayodhasi* (thirteenth moon day) they realised their sin of not praying the God and pleaded for forgiveness. The pleased graceful Lord Shiva forgave them and danced between the horns of the *Nandhi* (Holy Bull). That time is called *Pradhosham*. Whoever Prays Lord Shiva in that time, Lord Shiva fulfills their wishes and give them *mukthi*. Anoint Lord Shiva with Love, He would give Himself!

Among the poojas performed by *Shaivites* to the Graceful Lord Shiva. In *Shukla Paksha* (15 moon days from new moon to full moon) and *Krishna Paksha* (15 moon days from full moon to new moon) the evening of the *Trayodasi* (thirteenth moon day) between 4.30 pm to 6.00 p.m. is called "Pradosham". It comes once in fifteen moon days. *Pradosha* time is to Pray Lord Shiva and invoke His Blessings. Praying in this time will free us from sins and gives *Moksha* (hence the name *Pradosha*). During *Pradosha* time, a special type of circumambulating called ("*Somasutra Pradakshinam*") which is elaborated in this site separately.

During *Pradhosham* time anointing (*Abhishekam*) the *Shiva* deity with the Following is considered fruitful.

ABISHEKA NAME	ITS EFFECTS
PANCHAGAVYAM	Removes all sins of mankind
PANCHAMRUTHAM	Gives wealth
GHEE	Gives Moksha state
MILK	Gives long life
CURD	Gives Good Children
HONEY	Melodious voice
RICE POWDER	Frees from debts
SUGAR CANE JUICE	Gives good health and removes enmity
LIME JUICE	Removes fear of death
TENDER COCONUT JUICE	Gives enjoyment and full satisfaction in life
COOKED RICE (ANNAM)	Gives Majestic life
SANDAL PASTE	Gives Lakshmi's Grace
SUGAR	Removes enmity

Somasuthra Pradakshinam is a unique way of circumambulating the GOD.

First saluting the *Rishabha Devar* (Holy Bull or *Nandi*) go anti-clockwise and salute *Chandishwarar* (not crossing the *Gomukhi*). Now return in the clockwise manner salute *Rishabham* and continue clockwise till the *Gomukhi* (not to cross it again). Then return in anti-clockwise direction salute the *Rishabham* again and proceed towards *chaNdIshar*. From there return back clockwise without worshipping *Rishabham* and reach the *Gomukhi*. Finally return back anticlockwise from there to salute *Rishabham* and continue to *Chandishwarar* and return back to *Rishabham* and worship the *Shiva Lingam* (at the altar) by viewing through the space between the two horns of the Holy Bull. This is one *Pradakshinam*. Three such times *Pradakshinam* to be done. If you carefully observe the curve traced by doing the *pradakshinam* is very similar to the periphery of the crescent. Hence this way of circumambulating is called *Somasutra Pradakshinam*.

During the *pradhosham* time *Somasootra Pradakshinam* is the recommended way of circumambulating the God. In many of the temples this is followed always. A point to note here is that the *gomukhi* is never crossed. *gomukhi* is the place where the water after anointing (*abhiSheka theertham*) would be flowing northwards out. By doing this way of *Pradakshinam* one does not step over this holy water.

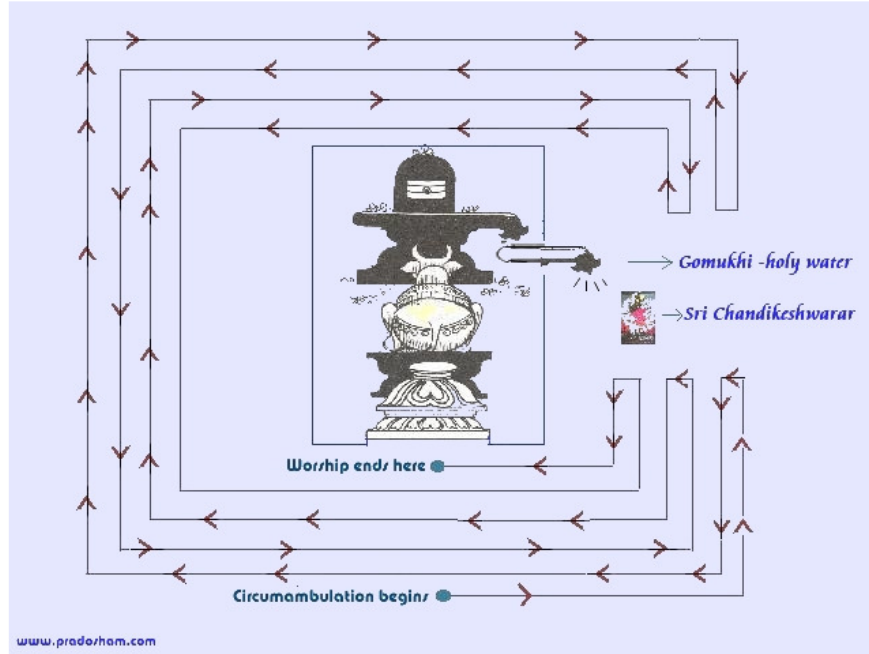
As per the above marked symbols this *Pradakshinams* is to be done. First saluting the *Rishabha devar* (Holy Bull) go anti-clockwise and salute *chaNdIshar* (not crossing the *Gomukhi*). Now return in the clockwise manner salute *VruShabham* and continue clockwise till the *Gomukhi* (not cross it again). Then return in anti-clockwise direction salute the *Rishabham* again and proceed towards *Chadeeshar*. From there return back clockwise without worshipping *Rishabham* and

reach the Gomukhi. Finally return back anti-clockwise from there to salute Rishabham and continue to Chandishar and return back to Rishabham and worship the Shiva Lingam (at the altar) by viewing through the space between the two horns of the Holy Bull. This is one *Pradakshinam*. Three such times *Pradakshinam* is to be performed.

If you carefully observe the curve traced by doing the *Pradakshinam* is very similar to the periphery of the crescent. Hence this way of circumambulating is called *Somasutra Pradakshinam*.

The following is the illustration of how you should perform *Somasutra Pradakshinam* :

SOMASUTRA PRADAKSHINAM (This is performed only during Pradosha Kalam)



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