

Why do we do pradakshina?

On visiting a temple, have you ever wondered why we follow a common path encircling the deities? This act of circumambulation is called pradakshina, translating as 'to the right' in Sanskrit.

WHEN CIRCUMBULATING THE DEITIES, WE CHANT:

'Yaani kaani cha
paapaani janmaantara
krtaani cha taani taanni
vinashyanti pradakshina pade pade'

"All the sins committed by an individual from innumerable past births are destroyed by each step taken whilst doing pradakshina."

WHY?

A circle can never be drawn from the centre. Using the deities to focus our attention on the Lord we place them in the centre, seen as the source and essence of our lives. When one can recognise the Lord as the focal point, they have essentially understood the significance of pradakshina.

Through the act of pradakshina the Lord imparts grace to every devotee without partiality. With every point on the circumference of a circle being equidistant from the centre, we are all equally as close to the Lord irrespective of wherever and whoever we maybe.

One may ask why pradakshina is performed in a clockwise manner. Many have said it helps to avoid "traffic jams", however past the convenience of this action there is a meaningful motive.

As our scriptures state, the right

side symbolises auspiciousness and with this in mind, our path of circumambulation ensures we lead ourselves to an auspicious life of righteousness. The Lord is seen as an indispensable source of help and strength, our guide, the 'right hand' of our lives. This act helps one to overcome their wrong tendencies and avoid repeating the sins of their past.

WHO?

'Matridevo
bhava, pitrudevo
bhava,
acharyadevo
bhava.' - May
you consider
your parents and
teachers as you
would the Lord.

In ancient time and tradition, many children have done their pradakshina around their parents and others have done it around divine personage. There is a similar story of how Lord Ganesh went around his parents to show that they are the centre of his life and world.

Furthermore, pradakshina is customarily done around ourselves to recognise and remember the supreme divinity within us. This act is usually done after one has completed their prayer and puja.

Meaning

To the right

Performed

Clockwise

Significance

To recognise the Lord as our focal point

Benefit

All sins are destroyed by each step taken whilst doing pradakshina.