

3. शिवापराध क्षमापण स्तोत्रम् / Śivāparādha Kṣamāpaṇa Stotram

Introduction

Śivāparādha Kṣamāpaṇa Stotram is one of the most beautiful, enlightening, and motivating compositions of Adi Shankara. Once we read and understand this Stotram, we feel sorry about all the offences we commit towards Shiva and will start praying him. Going by the name, अपराध - aparādha means faults, failings, crimes, offences, or mistakes (depending on the nature of the mistake committed) and क्षमापण - Kṣamāpaṇa means seeking pardon. Hence, शिवापराध - Śivāparādha are the offences we have committed towards Shiva and the Stotra “शिवापराध क्षमापण (Śivāparādha Kṣamāpaṇa)” is seeking pardon for all the offences committed towards Shiva. According to Purāna(s) like Shiva Purāna and Skanda Purāna, there are many kinds of offences made towards Lord Shiva.

Shiva has laid down certain Dhārmic rules (dos and don'ts) for us to follow. Sometimes we do what we should not and vice versa, and thus we commit Śivāparādha.

Though Adi Shankara mentions माँ - māṁ meaning “me” in all the verses of the Stotra, it is implied that the person who reads this Stotra is doing the prayer/seeking the pardon of Shiva.

In the first four shlokas, Adi Shankara beautifully describes the human plight during the four stages of life starting from infant to old age and expresses how we fail to Shiva during those stages. Then he enters into higher reaches of human persuasion in spiritual life. Further, Adi Shankara practically covers the entire gamut of the spiritual life; how we should worship Shiva (Bhakti mārga by performing Pūja), how we should perform various Karmas (Karma mārga through smārta karma, srauta karma, etc.), how we should contemplate on Shiva (Rāja Yōga mārga), and how we should develop Gnāna (Gnāna mārga through shravana, manana, and dhyāna).

He started with Bhakti mārga in the form of Stotra, because Stotra is at the base of bhakti. Bhakti is at the very base of Karma mārga and Gnāna mārga. In Srimad Bhagavad Gita Chapter 3, Bhagavān talks about only two mārgas - Pravrutti and Nivrutti, where he mentions Karma and Gnāna mārgas (Sāṅkhya Yōgam). In course of time, Bhakti has been recognized as a separate mārga because of the great bhaktas (devotees). This Stotra also mentions about Rāja mārga (in shloka 9) which is common to both Karma mārga and Gnāna mārga. Each mārga has its own special features, requirements, and procedures.

Through this Stotra, Adi Shankara brings out lapses of the devotee in following each of these spiritual paths and seeks pardon of Shiva. Adi Shankara concludes the Stotra by surrendering to Shiva, seeking his compassion and refuge.

1. आदौ कर्मप्रसङ्गात्कलयति कलुषं मातृकुक्षौ स्थितं मां विण्मूत्रामेध्यमध्ये क्वथयति नितरां जाठरो जातवेदाः ।

यद्यद्वै तत्र दुःखं व्यथयति नितरां शक्यते केन वक्तुं क्षन्तव्यो मेऽपराधः शिव शिव शिव भोः श्री महादेव शम्भो ॥

1. ādau karmaprasaṅgātkalayati kaluṣaṁ mātr̥kukṣau s̥hitaṁ māṁ viṅmūtrāmēdhyamadhyē kvathayati nitarāṁ jāṭharō jātavēdāḥ ।

yadyadvai tatra duḥkhaṁ vyathayati nitarāṁ śakyatē kēna vaktuṁ kṣantavyō mē'parādhaḥ śiva śiva śiva bhōḥ śrī mahādēva śambhō ॥

Meaning & Explanation:

In this shloka, Adi Shankara is describing the misery of the Jeevātma sitting in the mother's womb.

आदौ कर्मप्रसङ्गात्कलयति कलुषं मातृकुक्षौ स्थितं मां - ādau karmaprasaṅgātkalayati kaluṣaṁ mātr̥kukṣau s̥hitaṁ māṁ

आदौ - ādau - at the beginning; कर्मप्रसङ्गात् - karmaprasaṅgāt - because of the special/definitive attachment with past karmas; कलयति - kalayati - making, carrying; कलुषं - kaluṣaṁ - sins; मातृकुक्षौ - mātr̥kukṣau - mother's womb; स्थितं - s̥hitaṁ - living, abiding; मां - māṁ - me;

At the beginning of this human life, I abide in my mother's womb because of the sins carried by me due to the various karmas I performed in my previous birth(s) with attachment.

Notes:

During the prenatal stage, the Jeevātma resides in the mother's womb, carrying all the Karmas acquired during previous births.

Adi Shankara brings in the Vedanta Philosophy in all his stotras very beautifully. Especially in this stotra, right at the beginning, he brings out that philosophy and explains why one takes birth. Because of the definitive attachments to karma/duties from our past lives, we have accumulated sins due to which we are now suffering in the womb of the mother (taken another birth). If one performs karma without any attachment, then another birth will not happen.

विण्मूत्रामेध्यमध्ये क्वथयति नितरां जाठरो जातवेदाः - viṅmūtrāmēdhyamadhyē kvathayati nitarāṁ jāṭharō jātavēdāḥ

विट् - viṭ - excreta; मूत्र - mūtra - urine; अमेध्य - amēdhya - impurity; मध्ये - madhyē - in the midst of; क्वथयति - kvathayati - being boiled; नितरां - nitarāṁ - very much; जाठरो - jāṭharō - in the stomach; जातवेदाः - jātavēdāḥ - Agni (fire);

In my mother's womb, I suffer because I am in the midst of excreta, urine, and other impurities and being boiled too much by the Agni in her stomach.

Notes:

Adi Shankara explains the state of the Jeevātma (Soul) suffering in the mother's womb, in the midst of all impurities.

Mēdhya is a word derived from our Yāgas meaning "what can be offered and what is fit to be offered" in Yāga. Amēdhya means "what is not fit to be offered". In the context of this shloka, Amēdhya refers to impurity.

The boiling in the womb is attributed to Jātaveda (or Vaishwānara Agni) which means Agni in the stomach. We all have this Agni in our stomach which helps us to digest the food we consume.

Jātaveda in our Vedas is explained as - Jāta means whatever is born, Veda means knowing. Agni is referred to as Jātaveda as per the Vedas; i.e., the one who knows about everything that is born in this world. Agni has visibility to all of the creations in the world. The creation, sustenance, and destruction process happen through Agni and hence this special status is given to Agni. This Agni in my mother's stomach boils me and makes me suffer.

यद्यद्वै तत्र दुःखं व्यथयति नितरां शक्यते केन वक्तुं - yadyadvai tatra duḥkhaṁ vyathayati nitarāṁ śakyatē kēna vaktuṁ

यत् यत् - yat yat - whichever; वै - a connecting word, e.g. 'well', which we use while speaking; तत्र - tatra - in that place (referring to Mothers' womb); दुःखं - duḥkham - misery; व्यथयति - vyathayati - tortures; नितरां - nitarāṁ - very much; शक्यते - śakyatē - possible; केन - kēna - by whom; वक्तुं - vaktuṁ - to tell, describe;

Who can describe the various other miseries which I experienced in my mother's womb.

Notes:

This is a rhetorical question, and it is implied that no one can describe these miseries.

Adi Shankara is referring to various other miseries that have been experienced while residing inside mother's womb, other than what was listed in the first two lines of this shloka (being in the midst of the impurities, boiled by Agni.)

क्षन्तव्यो मेऽपराधः शिव शिव शिव भोः श्री महादेव शम्भो - kṣantavyō mē'aparādhaḥ śiva śiva śiva bhōḥ śrī mahādēva śambhō

क्षन्तव्यो - kṣantavyō - is to be pardoned; मे - mē - my; अपराधः - aparādhaḥ - faults/offence; शिव - śiva - auspiciousness incarnate and bestower of auspiciousness; भोः - bhōḥ - a word used to call or address a person, like 'sir'; श्री - śrī - a title of respect used before a name, Sri refers to Devi, Mahadeva together

with the Shakti of Devi is prayed to; महादेव - mahādēva - the greatest of Devas; शम्भो - śambhō - auspiciousness incarnate;

Hence my aparādha (offence) should be pardoned, Oh Shiva, the greatest of Devas, (Mahadeva) and auspiciousness incarnate (Shambho).

Notes:

This verse repeats throughout the Stotra, asking for pardon for all the offences committed towards Shiva.

It is implied here that Adi Shankara is saying, how I could think of you (Shiva) when I was in my mother's womb amidst so much suffering. Hence my aparādha (offence) of not being able to meditate on you (Shiva) is to be pardoned, i.e. though my aparādha (offence) is unpardonable, I have no other resort but to seek your refuge.

Adi Shankara calls out to Shiva three times to emphasise the sincerity of the prayer and also the fact that my aparādha (offence) is unpardonable, but Shiva is the only one who could pardon me. This is one way of interpreting this emphasis. We can also interpret that the word Shiva is being used thrice to seek pardon for the mistakes committed in three ways, i.e., through thought, word and deed.

In earlier days bhōḥ is a term used to call somebody, referring to a loukeeka (worldly). The term "hariḥ" is used to refer/call a Vaideeka.

Adi Shankara is bringing out various attributes of Shiva by saying "शिव शिव शिव भोः श्री महादेव शम्भो /shiva shiva shiva bho shri mahadeva shambho", to please Shiva and get the pardon for the offences that have been committed on which there is no control.

Śambhō is another name for Shiva - Śam means auspiciousness. Sambhu is Auspiciousness embodied. There are three terms that are used to describe Shiva, according to Sri Rudram - नमः शंभवे च मयोभवे च नमः शंकराय च मयस्कराय च नमः शिवाय च शिवतराय च /namaḥ shambhave cha mayobhave cha namah shankaraya cha mayaskaraya cha namah shivaya cha shivataraya cha.

Shankara means शं करोति इति शंकरः/Sham karoti iti Shankaraḥ - the one who bestows auspiciousness on his devotees.

Shiva is the combination of Shambu and Shankara - he is the form of auspiciousness and he is willing to bestow auspiciousness on those who worship him. The term नमः शिवाय /namaḥ Shivaya encompasses everything about Shiva. Hence Adi Shankara uses Shiva first and then refers to the other terms such as Mahadeva and Shambhu to praise him more.

2.बाल्ये दुःखातिरेकात् मललुलितवपुः स्तन्यपाने पिपासुः नो शक्तश्चेन्द्रियेभ्यो भवमलजनिताः जन्तवो मां तुदन्ति।

नानारोगातिदुःखाद्द्रुदित परवशः शङ्करं न स्मरामि क्षन्तव्यो मेऽपराधः शिव शिव शिव भोः श्री महादेव शम्भो ॥

2.bālyē duḥkhātirēkānmalalulitavapuḥ stanyapānē pipāsuḥ nō śaktaścēndriyēbhyō
bhavamalajanitāḥ jantavō māṃ tudanti ॥

2.nānārōgātiduḥkhādruditaparavaśaḥ śaṅkaraṃ na smarāmi kṣantavyō mē'parādhaḥ śiva śiva śiva
bhōḥ śrī mahādēva śambhō ॥

Meaning & Explanation:

In this shloka, Adi Shankara is describing the miseries of the infant phase of life.

बाल्ये दुःखातिरेकान्मललुलितवपुः स्तन्यपाने पिपासुः - bālyē duḥkhātirēkānmalalulitavapuḥ stanyapānē
pipāsuḥ

बाल्ये - bālyē - during childhood; दुःख - duḥkha- misery; अतिरेकात् - ātirēkāṭ - due to excessive; मल - mala - impurity; लुलित - lulita - covered; वपुः - vapuḥ - body; स्तन्य - stanya - mother's milk; पाने - pānē - in drinking; पिपासुः - pipāsuḥ - eager to drink;

As an infant, I am in excessive misery because I lie on the ground and am covered by impurity (a child lies in its own urine and excreta). Due to frequent hunger and thirst (another suffering), I am eager to drink mother's milk.

नो शक्तश्चेन्द्रियेभ्यो भवमलजनिता जन्तवो मां तुदन्ति - nō śaktaścēndriyēbhyō bhavamalajanitāḥ
jantavō māṃ tudanti

नो शक्तः - nō śaktaḥ - not able; च - cā - and; इन्द्रियेभ्यो - indriyēbhyō - by the sense organs (Karmendriyas- hands and legs); भव - bhava - present; मल - mala - impurity, filth; जनिता - janitā - born; जन्तवो - jantavō - small beings like insects; मां - māṃ - me; तुदन्ति - tudanti - bite, pierce;

I am not able to do anything with my sense organs. Insects born in filth are present around me, and they bite me.

नानारोगातिदुःखाद्द्रुदित परवशः शङ्करं न स्मरामि - nānārōgātiduḥkhādruditaparavaśaḥ śaṅkaraṃ na
smarāmi

नाना - nānā - many; रोग - rōga - diseases; अति दुःखात् - ati duḥkhāt - due to too much of suffering; रुदित - rudita - crying; परवशः - paravaśaḥ - under the control/sway of somebody else; शङ्करं - śaṅkaraṃ - Shankara; न - na - don't; स्मरामि - smarāmi - think of;

Suffering too much due to many diseases associated with childhood, and being under the control of someone else, I am unable to meditate upon you Shankara.

क्षन्तव्यो मेऽपराधः शिव शिव शिव भोः श्री महादेव शम्भो - kṣantavyō mē'parādhaḥ śiva śiva śiva bhōḥ śrī
mahādēva śambhō

क्षन्तव्यो - kṣantavyō - is to be pardoned; मे - mē - my; अपराधः - aparādhaḥ - faults/offence; शिव - śiva - auspiciousness incarnate and bestower of auspiciousness; भोः - bhōḥ - a word used to call or address a person, like 'sir'; श्री - śrī - a title of respect used before a name, Sri refers to Devi, Mahadeva together with the Shakti of Devi is prayed to; महादेव - mahādēva - the greatest of Devas; शम्भो - śambhō - auspiciousness incarnate;

Hence my aparādha (offence) should be pardoned, Oh Shiva, the greatest of Devas, (Mahadeva) and auspiciousness incarnate (Shambho).

3. प्रौढोऽहं यौवनस्थो विषयविषधरैः पञ्चभिर्मर्मसन्धौ दष्टो नष्टो विवेकः सुतधनयुवतिस्वादसौख्ये निषण्णः ।
शैवे चिन्ताविहीनं मम हृदयमहो मानगर्वाधिरूढं क्षन्तव्यो मेऽपराधः शिव शिव शिव भोः श्री महादेव शम्भो
॥

3. prauḍhō'haṃ yauvanasthō viṣayaviṣadharaiḥ pañcabhirmarmasandhau daṣṭō naṣṭō vivēkaḥ
sutadhanayuvatisvādasaukhyē niṣaṇṇaḥ ।

Śaive cintāvihīnaṃ mama hṛdayamahō mānagarvādhirūḍhaṃ kṣantavyō mē'parādhaḥ śiva śiva
śiva bhōḥ śrī mahādēva śambhō ॥

Meaning & Explanation:

In this shloka, Adi Shankara is describing the miseries of the youth/adulthood phase of life.

प्रौढोऽहं यौवनस्थो विषयविषधरैः पञ्चभिर्मर्मसन्धौ - prauḍhō'haṃ yauvanasthō viṣayaviṣadharaiḥ
pañcabhirmarmasandhau

प्रौढः - prauḍh - grown-up; अहम् - ahaṃ - I; यौवनः - yauvanaḥ - youth; स्थः - sthaḥ - being; विषय - viṣaya - various objects (of human life); विषधरैः - viṣadharaiḥ - holding poison; पञ्चभिः - pañcabhiḥ - by five; मर्म - marma - vital; सन्धौ - sandhau - joints;

Because I have grown up and in the stage of youth, I am stung in my vital joints by five poisonous snakes, which appear in front of me in the form of attractive objects.

Notes:

Here, विषधर viṣadhara refers to snake (one which holds poison). The various objects of human life though appear to be attractive, are like poisonous snakes. These attractive objects are caught by the five sense organs – Shabdah (sound), Sparsha (touch), Roopa (vision), Rasa (taste) and Gandha (smell). These five senses are causing misery and are stinging (just like snakes' sting) at vital joints of my body.

दष्टो नष्टोऽविवेकः सुतधनयुवतिस्वादसौख्ये निषण्णः - daṣṭō naṣṭō vivēkaḥ
sutadhanayuvatisvādasaukhyē niṣaṇṇaḥ

दष्टो - daṣṭō - I am stung; नष्टो - naṣṭō - lost विवेकः - vivēkaḥ - the power of discrimination; सुत - suta - sons or daughters; धन - dhana - wealth; युवति - yuvati - young girl; स्वाद - svād - taste; सौख्ये - saukhyē - happiness or joy; निषण्णः - niṣaṇṇaḥ - immersed in;

I lost my power of discrimination and was immersed in what I had considered as happiness derived from progeny, wealth, young girl, and taste.

Notes:

Being in the stage of youth, and influenced by the five sense organs, I have lost my ability to discriminate. Viveka and vairāgya are listed as the first two steps of the gnāna mārga, followed by - shamādi shatka sampatti - six qualities that one has to develop starting with shama (Controlling mind and mental agitation). This should be followed by मुमुक्षुत्वं - mumukshutvam - the desire for moksha. This is Gnāna mārga in a nutshell.

Viveka is the ability to discriminate between right and wrong, between dharma and adharma. Are our actions in conformance with the tenets of dharma or not? We have to use this principle of discrimination at every stage of our action/activity. I am not doing this because my power of discrimination is lost. Having lost the power of discrimination I am immersed in joy (merrymaking) that revolves around son (and daughter), wealth, young girl and enjoyment (arising out of these or from the food).

शैवे चिन्ताविहीनं मम हृदयमहो मानगर्वाधिरूढं - śaivēcintāvihīnaṃ mama hṛdayamahō mānagarvādhirūḍhaṃ

शैवे - śaive - anything connected with Shiva, e.g. Shiva nāma, pūja, temple; चिन्ता - cintā - thought; विहीनं - vihīnaṃ - devoid of; मम - mama - my; हृदयम् - hṛdayam - my heart; अहो - ahō - woe unto me; मान- māna- conceit; गर्व - garvā - arrogance; अधिरूढं - ādhirūḍhaṃ - overridden by;

My heart is overridden by conceit and arrogance, and in this condition, I do not think of anything connected with Shiva.

Notes:

I am devoid of any thought that's connected to Shiva, since I am deeply involved in son (and daughter), wealth, young girl and taste. Adi Shankara is listing one more infirmity here - my heart is overridden by conceit (highly of self, and possessions) and arrogance (with reference to others).

In this condition, how can I entertain anything connected with Shiva (including Shiva nāma)?

क्षन्तव्यो मेऽपराधः शिव शिव शिव भोः श्री महादेव शम्भो - kṣantavyō mē'parādhaḥ śiva śiva śiva bhōḥ śrī mahādēva śambhō

क्षन्तव्यो - kṣantavyō - is to be pardoned; मे - mē - my; अपराधः - aparādhah - faults/offence; शिव - śiva - auspiciousness incarnate and bestower of auspiciousness; भोः - bhōḥ - a word used to call or address a person, like 'sir'; श्री - śrī - a title of respect used before a name, Sri refers to Devi, Mahadeva together with the Shakti of Devi is prayed to; महादेव - mahādēva - the greatest of Devas; शम्भो - śambhō - auspiciousness incarnate;

Hence my aparādha (offence) should be pardoned, Oh Shiva, the greatest of Devas, (Mahadeva) and auspiciousness incarnate (Shambho).

4. वार्धक्ये चेन्द्रियाणां विकलगतिमतश्चाधिदैवादितापैः प्राप्तै रोगैर्वियोगैर्व्यसनकृशतनोर्ज्ञप्तिहीनं च दीनम् ।
मिथ्यामोहाभिलाषैर्भ्रमति मम मनो धूर्जटेर्ध्यानशून्यं क्षन्तव्यो मेऽपराधः शिव शिव शिव भोः श्री महादेव
शम्भो ॥

4. vārdhakyē cēndriyāṇāṃ vikalagatimataścādhidaivāditāpaiḥ prāptai
rōgairviyōgairvyasanakṛśatanōrjñaptihīnaṃ ca dīnam ।

mithyāmōhābhilāṣairbhramati mama manō dhūrjaṭērdhyānaśūnyaṃ kṣantavyō mē'parādhah
śiva śiva śiva bhōḥ śrī mahādēva śambhō ॥4 ॥

In this shloka, Adi Shankara is describing the miseries of the older phase of the life.

Meaning & Explanation:

वार्धक्ये चेन्द्रियाणां विकलगतिमतश्चाधिदैवादितापैः - vārdhakyē cēndriyāṇāṃ
vikalagatimataścādhidaivāditāpaiḥ

वार्धक्ये - vārdhakyē - in old age; च - cā - and; इन्द्रियाणां - indriyāṇāṃ - sense organs; विकल - vikala - crippled; गति - gati - path; मतः - mataḥ - understanding; च - cā - and ; आधिदैव - adhidaivā - suffering due to destiny; आदि - ādi - etcetera; तापैः - tāpaiḥ - suffering due to heat;

In old age, my sense organs and power of understanding become crippled and are unable to follow the right path. Also, I go through various types of suffering (taapa) ādhidaiva etc.

Notes:

In old age, our sense organs become crippled and do not function properly, due to which our power of understanding is also crippled.

Taapa means suffering out of the heat. Our Shāstras have analyzed everything in great detail and depth, with various aspects and formats so that we understand at least one of these formats along with the principles and philosophy behind it.

There are three types of suffering (taapas) described in our Shāstras:

1. *Suffering due to our destiny (आधिदैविक/ādhi-daivika): Misery due to natural calamities like earthquake etc.*
2. *Suffering due to other living beings (आधिभौतिक/ādhi-bhoutika): Getting impacted/affected because of other beings like insects or animals, e.g., Getting bit by a dog while walking.*
3. *Suffering due to internal bodily reasons (आध्यात्मिक/ādhyatmika): e.g., General diseases/ailments like fever, heart trouble etc.*

Though these three types of suffering exist in all the phases of life, their impact is high during old age.

प्राप्तै रोगैर्वियोगैर्व्यसनकृशतनोर्ज्ञप्तिहीनं च दीनम् - prāptai rōgairviyōgairvyasanakṛśatanōrjñaptihīnaṃ ca dīnam

प्राप्तै रोगैः - prāptai rōgaiḥ - various diseases which I have contracted; वियोगैः - viyōgaiḥ - separation; व्यसन - vyasana - suffering; कृश - kṛśa - emaciated; तनुः - tanuḥ - body; ज्ञप्ति - jñapti - power of memory, knowledge, understanding; हीनं - hīnaṃ - lacking; च - cā - and; दीनम् - dīnam - poor, distressed;

I suffer from diseases and separation. Because of this suffering, my body has become emaciated, my power of understanding, memory and knowledge is lost, and I have become poor and distressed.

मिथ्यामोहाभिलाषैर्भ्रमति मम मनो धूर्जटेर्ध्यानशून्यं - mithyāmōhābhilāṣairbhramati mama manō dhūrjaṭērdhyānaśūnyaṃ

मिथ्या - mithyā - false notions; मोह - mōhā - delusion ; अभिलाषैः - ābhilāṣaiḥ - desires; भ्रमति - bhramati - revolves; मम मनः - mama manaḥ - my mind; धूर्जटा - dhūrjaṭa - Shiva; ध्यान - dhyāna - thought; शून्यं - śūnyaṃ - devoid of;

My mind is completely devoid of the thought of Shiva, as it is revolving around various desires arising from false notions and delusions.

Notes:

Delusion is not seeing the object as what it is. The famous Vedānta metaphor “Snake & Rope” clearly explains the delusion. When we see/feel a rope in the dark, we imagine it to be a snake (mōhā /delusion). This false imagination causes anxiety. Later, when we bring light, we realise it is a rope (the truth), this relieves us from the anxiety (suffering). What happened here is, because of the delusion (mōhā), we suffered. Similarly, all worldly objects are mityā, i.e., false appearances. Mōha engrosses the mind with desires. Due to mōha (delusion), we think that those objects are pleasure-giving, but they give us only sadness or suffering. This is being repeatedly mentioned in our Shāstras, including Srimad Bhagavad Gita.

Shiva is called Dhoorjata as he is having heavy “Jata bhāra” (matted tresses) on his head. My desires are not lost as my mind is revolving around false notions, delusion and desires.

क्षन्तव्यो मेऽपराधः शिव शिव शिव भोः श्री महादेव शम्भो - kṣantavyō mē'parādhaḥ śiva bhōḥ śrī mahādēva śambhō

क्षन्तव्यो - kṣantavyō - is to be pardoned; मे - mē - my; अपराधः - aparādhaḥ - faults/offence; शिव - śiva - auspiciousness incarnate and bestower of auspiciousness; भोः - bhōḥ - a word used to call or address a person, like 'sir'; श्री - śrī - a title of respect used before a name, Sri refers to Devi, Mahadeva together with the Shakti of Devi is prayed to; महादेव - mahādēva - the greatest of Devas; शम्भो - śambhō - auspiciousness incarnate;

Hence my aparādha (offence) should be pardoned, Oh Shiva, the greatest of Devas, (Mahadeva) and auspiciousness incarnate (Shambho).

5 स्नात्वा प्रत्यूषकाले स्नपनविधिविधौ नाहतं गाङ्गतोयं पूजार्थं वा कदाचिद्बहुतरगहनेऽखण्डबिल्वीदलम् वा ।
नानीता पद्ममाला सरसि विकसिता गन्धपुष्पैस्त्वदर्थं क्षन्तव्यो मेऽपराधः शिव शिव शिव भोः श्री महादेव शम्भो
॥

5.snātvā pratyūṣakālē snapanavidhividhau nāhṛtaṃ gāṅgatōyaṃ pūjārthaṃ vā
kadācidbahutaragahanē'khaṇḍabilvīdalaṃ vā ।

nānītā padmamālā sarasi vikasitā gandhapuṣpaistvadarthaṃ kṣantavyō mē'parādhaḥ śiva bhōḥ śrī
mahādēva śambhō ॥

Starting from this shloka, Adi Shankara describes various aspects that are expected out of a Shiva-bhakta during the course of his/her life. This gives us an opportunity to know what is expected of us.

In this specific shloka, he explains the aparādha (failures) of Shiva-bhakta while doing Shiva Pūja.

Meaning & Explanation:

स्नात्वा प्रत्यूषकाले स्नपनविधिविधौ नाहतं गाङ्गतोयं - snātvā pratyūṣakālē snapanavidhividhau nāhṛtaṃ
gāṅgatōyaṃ

स्नात्वा - snātvā - having bathed; प्रत्यूषकाले - pratyūṣakālē - early in the morning, before dawn; स्नपन -
snapana - bathing or abhishekam of Shiva; विधि - vidhi - rules; विधौ - vidhau - during that process; न - na
- not; आहतम् - āhṛtaṃ - brought; गाङ्गतोयं - gāṅgatōyaṃ - Ganga water;

Despite having bathed before dawn, following the rules of snapana as laid down in the Shāstras, I did not bring the Ganga water for performing abhishekam to Shiva.

Note:

As per the Shāstras, one has to wake up at brahma-muhūrtam (the time of early dawn, precisely one and a half hour before the sunrise). After having bathed before dawn, one has to perform Shiva Pūja that includes abhisheka with Ganga water as per the rules of our Shāstras. I could not do this which is an aparādha (offence) towards Shiva.

**पूजार्थं वा कदाचिद्बहुतरगहनेऽखण्डबिल्वीदलम् वा - pūjārthaṃ vā
kadācidbahutaragahanē'khaṇḍabilvīdalam vā ।**

पूजार्थ - pūjārthaṃ - for the sake of performing the pūja; वा - vā - and/or; कदाचित् - kadācit - at some time; बहुतर - bahutara - much; गहने - gahana – into the deep forest; अखण्ड - akhaṇḍa - whole, unbroken; बिल्वीदलम् - bilvīdalam - bilva leaf; वा - vā - and/or;

I did not go into the deep forest even at some point in time, to get whole bilva leaf and performing pūja.

Notes:

Bilvi Dalam (Bilva leaves) should always have three petals for Shiva Pūja. To emphasize using the whole Bilava leaf for Shiva Pūja, Adi Shankara used “अखण्ड बिल्वीदलम् - akhaṇḍa bilvīdalam” (unbroken and has three petals).

Adi Shankara says if not every day, not even once did he go to the deep forest to fetch many whole bilva leaves for Shiva-pūja, when they are not available in the outer side of the forest. I could not do this which is an aparādha (offence) towards Shiva.

**नानीता पद्ममाला सरसि विकसिता गन्धपुष्पैस्त्वदर्थ - nānītā padmamālā sarasi vikasitā
gandhapuṣpaistvadarthaṃ**

न - na - not; आनीता - anītā - brought; पद्ममाला - padmamālā - garland of lotuses; सरसि - sarasi - pond; विकसिता - vikasitā - bloomed; गन्धपुष्पैः - gandhapuṣpaiḥ - with fragrant flowers; त्वदर्थ - tvadarthaṃ - for your sake;

I neither brought any fully bloomed lotuses from any pond to make a garland nor did I do any Pūja with special fragrant flowers to you.

These (listed in the above three lines) are my shortcomings towards Shiva Pūja. Hence seeking pardon for my aparādha (offence)

**क्षन्तव्यो मेऽपराधः शिव शिव शिव भोः श्री महादेव शम्भो - kṣantavyō mē'parādhaḥ śiva śiva śiva bhōḥ śrī
mahādēva śambhō**

क्षन्तव्यो - kṣantavyō - is to be pardoned; मे - mē - my; अपराधः - aparādhaḥ - faults/offence; शिव - śiva - auspiciousness incarnate and bestower of auspiciousness; भोः - bhōḥ - a word used to call or address a person, like 'sir'; श्री - śrī - a title of respect used before a name, Sri refers to Devi, Mahadeva together with the Shakti of Devi is prayed to; महादेव - mahādēva - the greatest of Devas; शम्भो - śambhō - auspiciousness incarnate;

Hence my aparādha (offence) should be pardoned, Oh Shiva, the greatest of Devas, (Mahadeva) and auspiciousness incarnate (Shambho).

6. दुग्धैर्मध्वाज्ययुक्तैर्दधिगुडसहितैः स्नापितं नैव लिङ्गं नो लिप्तं चन्दनाद्यैः कनकविरचितैः पूजितं न प्रसूनैः ।
धूपैः कर्पूरदीपैर्विधरसयुतैर्नैव भक्ष्योपहारैः क्षन्तव्यो मेऽपराधः शिव शिव शिव भोः श्री महादेव शम्भो ॥

6. dugdhairmadhvājyayuktairdadhigudasahitaiḥ snāpitaṃ naiva liṅgaṃ nō liptaṃ candanādyaiḥ
kanakaviracitaiḥ pūjitaṃ na prasūnaiḥ ।

dhūpaiḥ karpūradīpairvidharasayutairnaiva bhakṣyōpahāraiḥ kṣantavyō mē'parādhaḥ śiva śiva
śiva bhōḥ śrī mahādēva śambhō ॥

In this shloka, Adi Shankara is continuing with the aparādha (offence) of Shiva-bhakta while doing Shiva Pūja.

Meaning & Explanation:

दुग्धैर्मध्वाज्ययुक्तैर्दधिगुडसहितैः स्नापितं नैव लिङ्गं - dugdhairmadhvājyayuktairdadhigudasahitaiḥ
snāpitaṃ naiva liṅgaṃ

दुग्धैः - dugdhaiḥ - by milk; मधु - madhu - honey; आज्य - ājya - ghee; युक्तैः - yuktaiḥ - along with; दधि -
dadhi - curd; गुड - guda - jaggery; सहितैः - sahitaiḥ - with; स्नापितं - snāpitaṃ - bathed; न एव - na eva -
not at all; लिङ्गं - liṅgaṃ - Shiva Lingam;

I never did abhishekam to Shiva lingam with milk, honey, ghee, curd and jaggery.

Notes:

Panchāmrita snānam of Shiva lingam is done with a mixture of the five items viz, milk, curd, honey, ghee and jaggery. Each of these items individually is also used for abhishekam. These days it is a practice to use sugar for abhishekam instead of jaggery, which was not the case during Adi Shankara's time.

All the above-mentioned items (Panchāmritam) are very common household items that can be used as part of Shiva Pūja. The word नैव /naiva is used by Adi Shankara to emphasize not even including these very common items during Shiva Pūja.

नो लिप्तं चन्दनाद्यैः कनकविरचितैः पूजितं न प्रसूनैः - nō liptaṃ candanādyaiḥ kanakaviracitaiḥ pūjitaṃ
na prasūnaiḥ

नो लिप्तं - nō liptaṃ - not anointed; चन्दन - candana - sandal paste; आद्यैः - ādyaiḥ - etcetera; कनक -
kanaka - gold; विरचितैः - viracitaiḥ - made of; पूजितं न - pūjitaṃ na - did not perform pūja; प्रसूनैः -
prasūnaiḥ - with flowers;

I neither anointed Shiva lingam with sandal paste and other fragrant materials nor did I perform Shiva-pūja with flowers made of gold.

धूपैः कर्पूरदीपैर्विविधरसयुतैर्नैव भक्ष्योपहारैः - dhūpaiḥ karpūradīpairvividharasayutairnaiva bhakṣyōpahāraiḥ

धूपैः - dhūpaiḥ - incense; कर्पूर - karpūra - camphor; दीपैः - dīpa - deepa; विविध - vividha - different; रसयुतैः - rasayutaiḥ - having taste; न ए - na eva - not at all; भक्ष्य - bhakṣya - eatable; उपहारैः - upahāraiḥ - offering;

I did not worship with dhoopa or karpūra hārati or deepa hārati, nor did I make offerings of varieties of eatables having different tastes.

Notes:

कर्पूरदीप Karpūra dīpa here can be taken as deepa hārati (which is given before and karpūra hārati separately, or as deepa of karpoora. Also, I could not do tasty edible offerings (with six different Rasas) for Shiva-pūja. As per the Shāstras, whatever we eat must be offered to God before consumption. We eat all varieties of food with six different rasas but fail to offer them to Shiva.

क्षन्तव्यो मेऽपराधः शिव शिव शिव भोः श्री महादेव शम्भो - kṣantavyō mē'parādhaḥ śiva śiva śiva bhōḥ śrī mahādēva śambhō

क्षन्तव्यो - kṣantavyō - is to be pardoned; मे - mē - my; अपराधः - aparādhaḥ - faults/offence; शिव - śiva - auspiciousness incarnate and bestower of auspiciousness; भोः - bhōḥ - a word used to call or address a person, like 'sir'; श्री - śrī - a title of respect used before a name, Sri refers to Devi, Mahadeva together with the Shakti of Devi is prayed to; महादेव - mahādēva - the greatest of Devas; शम्भो - śambhō - auspiciousness incarnate;

Hence my aparādha (offence) should be pardoned, Oh Shiva, the greatest of Devas, (Mahadeva) and auspiciousness incarnate (Shambho).

7. नो शक्यं स्मार्तकर्म प्रतिपदगहने प्रत्यवायाकुलाढ्ये श्रौते वार्ता कथं मे द्विजकुलविहिते ब्रह्ममार्गानुसारे ।

तत्वेऽज्ञातेऽविचारे श्रवणमननयोः किं निदिध्यासितव्यं क्षन्तव्यो मेऽपराधः शिव शिव शिव भोः श्री महादेव शम्भो ॥

7. nō śakyaṃ smārtakarma pratipadagahanē pratyavāyākulāḍhyē śrautē vārtā kathaṃ mē dvijakulavihitē brahmamārgānusārē ।

tatvē'jñātē'vicārēḥ śravaṇamananayōḥ kiṃ nididhyāsītavyaṃ kṣantavyō mē'parādhaḥ śiva śiva śiva bhōḥ śrī mahādēva śambhō ॥

After referring to four stages of human life and simple Shiva Pūja process, Adi Shankara is now getting into more intense activities of Karma mārga, Bhakti mārga and Gnāna mārga.

This shloka describes the Karma mārga aspects.

Meaning & Explanation:

नो शक्यं स्मार्तकर्म प्रतिपदगहने प्रत्यवायाकुलाढ्ये - nō śakyam smārtakarma pratipadagahanē pratyavāyākulāḍhyē

नो शक्यं - nō śakyam - not able to do; स्मार्तकर्म - smārtakarma - certain rituals given in Smritis (generally using Agni); प्रतिपद - pratipada - every step; गहने - gahane - difficult, abstruse; प्रत्यवाय - pratyavāya - incorrect performance which calls for punishment; आकुल - akula - confused, worried; आढ्य - aḍhya - abundant;

I am not able to perform the smārta-karma because it is difficult at every step. There are so many incorrect performances of smārta-karma which call for punishment, and I am worried that I may commit an offence.

Notes:

Many smārta-karmas are listed in Shāstras (smrithi), such as Ganapathi hōmam, Navagraha hōmam, Sudarshana hōmam that are to be performed from time to time. There are many special pūjas like Satyanārayana pūja, which we perform from time to time. The above hōmams can be performed using the Aupāsana Agni. By expressing his fears of committing an offence in smārta-karma, Adi Shankara is hinting to us how carefully these karmas should be performed.

Smārta-karmas are comparatively simpler in comparison with śrauta-karmas (Vedic rituals). Aupāsanam which we are supposed to do every day is a smārta-karma. Agnihotram which we are supposed to do every day is a śrauta-karma.

For śrauta-karma, there are special procedures of agni-adhānam (receiving Agni). People who have done this are called Āahitāgnis. Only Āahitāgnis can perform Agnihotram. Smārta-agni, which is Aupāsana Agni is a single Agni which we receive at the time of marriage. From that point of time, it is not supposed to be extinguished at all, and Oupasanam should be performed twice a day (morning and evening). All the homās have to be performed with Aupāsana Agni. As per Vedas, Agni is the basic entity needed for worship by a brahmana.

Śrauta-agni which is used in Agnihotram is three Agni (Aahavaniya, Dakshinagni and Garhapatya), to be received from a competent guru and in a prescribed manner.

श्रौते वार्ता कथं मे द्विजकुलविहिते ब्रह्ममार्गानुसारे - śrautē vārtā katham mē dvijakulavihitē brahmamārgānusārē

श्रौते - śrautē - in Vedas; वार्ता - vārtā - talk about/knowledge/information; कथं - katham - how; मे - mē - for me; द्विज - dvija - brāhmana (twice born); कुल - kula - dynasty, lineage; विहिते - vihite - prescribed; ब्रह्म - brahma - Brahman; मार्ग - mārgā - path; अनुसार - anusāra - to follow;

For me, how can there be a talk of Śrauta karmas that are laid down for brāhmana lineage to follow the path of attaining Brahman?

Notes:

Śrauta karmas are rituals or yāgas laid down in the Vedas for brāhmana kula for following the path to attain Brahman, e.g., Sōma yāga, Vājapeya yāga, Pundarika yāga etc. They are more intense than smārta-karmas.

Dvija means twice-born and includes brāhmana, Kshatriya and vaishyās but in this context, it refers to brāhmanas. Twice born because they are born to brāhmana parents by birth and second birth is at the time of upanayanam. Only after upanayanam a brāhmana is entitled to chant Vedas and will become a real brāhmana. There are karmas prescribed specially for brāhmana lineage, which is required for following the path of attaining Brahman. These special karmas are prescribed in Vedas.

Adi Shankara is mentioning that, how can I even think of srauta karmas, when I am not able to perform even the preliminary smārta-karmas.

तत्वेऽज्ञातेऽविचारे श्रवणमननयोः किं निदिध्यासितव्यं - tatvē'jñātē'vicārēḥ śravaṇamananayōḥ kiṃ nididhyāsītavyaṃ

तत्वे - tatve - true principle; अज्ञाते - ajñātē - not known it; अविचारे - avicārēḥ - could not think of vichāra mārga or gnāna mārga; श्रवण मननयोः - śravaṇa mananayōḥ - sravana and manana; किं - kiṃ - what; निदिध्यासितव्यं - nididhyāsītavyaṃ - do nididhyasana;

I do not know about tatva and could not think of vichāra mārga. When I have not done shravana and manana, what could I do about nididhyasana.

Notes:

Only through vichāra mārga, one can know what is tatva, the true principle of human life. Vichāra means focusing the mind on Shiva or Prabrahman. For this, the mind should be purified through various steps.

We should remember that all our karmas are for our own chittashuddi, i.e., purification of the mind. All karmas are not for pleasing Shiva, Shiva is complete in himself. He does not need us but we need him. Sākshātkāra (The Realisation) of Shiva will happen only if the chitta is pure. Only in a purified chitta will Shiva appear.

I can see Shiva in my heart only if my heart is pure. My heart is filled with impurities accumulated in crores of births that I have taken. I have to get rid of these impurities only by performing Shiva-pūja, smārta-karma and srauta karma which I have not done. I have not achieved the aim of human life and that of brāhmana unless I see Shiva in my heart, which is the tatva!

After purifying my heart, I have to go to vichāra mārga (gnāna mārga). That is focussing the mind on the parabrahman, Shiva. For focusing the mind on parabrahman the mind should be pure. I have not taken any steps for purification, so where is the question of me thinking about vichāra-mārga. I cannot know of that tatva as I have not followed the vichāra-mārga.

In various Vedānta works of Adi Shankara, like Viveka-chudamani, he describes how to get the tatva gnāna. He mentions that after completing all purificatory rituals, one should go to a Guru for seeking Brahmavidya. If one is qualified, Guru will teach him. Then he gets to know of tatva through vichāra-mārga.

A verse from Brihadāranyaka Upanishad by Sage Yājñavalkya helps us relate to these thoughts. Sage Yājñavalkya had two wives - Maitreyi and Gargi. A worldly-minded Maitreyi requested sage Yājñavalkya to explain the principles of attaining Parabrahman, during that conversation Yagnavalkya said:

आत्मा वा अरे द्रष्टव्यो श्रोतव्यो, मन्तव्यो निदिध्यासितव्यः;
Ātma vā are drushtavyō shrotavyō, mantavyō nididhyāsisvyaḥ

Ātma has to be seen by knowing about it, listening from Guru, reflecting deeply on it (meditate), and continuously contemplating on and thus assimilating Parabrahman.

The first step is knowing about Jeevatma and Paramātma (drushtavyō).

And next comes Shravana (shrotavyō) - Listening from a competent Guru by a competent disciple, at a time the Guru feels appropriate for the disciple.

Once Indra reached out to Brahma (the Guru) to understand Paramatma. Though both are competent enough, Brahma asks him to wait for thirty-six months by following Brahmacharya (celibacy) in āshram. So, Shravana (shrotavyō) is not just mere listening rather it is also the wilfulness of the competent Guru to decide the time when the disciple would be ready to receive the knowledge.

Followed by Manana (mantavyō) - reflecting on the acquired knowledge and getting clarifications from Guru. In the case of Indra, he reflected on the knowledge received from Brahma (Guru), and with those thoughts, he reached out to Brahma and was course-corrected. (Initially, Indra thought the body, prāna was the Brahman and later came to know of the real Brahman with the help of his Guru).

Finally, nididhyāsanam (nididhyāsisvyaḥ) - continuous unbroken contemplation i.e: Samādhi or becoming one with Brahman. Despite all the worldly thoughts and actions, one should be continuously having consciousness of the Brahman and be established in Brahman.

With these four steps, one can attain tatva gnāna. And I cannot attain this tatva gnāna as I am not able to perform simple karmas itself. This leads to aparādha (offence) towards Shiva, and I seek his pardon.

क्षन्तव्यो मेऽपराधः शिव शिव शिव भोः श्री महादेव शम्भो - kṣantavyō mē'parādhaḥ śiva bhōḥ śrī mahādēva śambhō

क्षन्तव्यो - kṣantavyō - is to be pardoned; मे - mē - my; अपराधः - aparādhaḥ - faults/offence; शिव - śiva - auspiciousness incarnate and bestower of auspiciousness; भोः - bhōḥ - a word used to call or address a person, like 'sir'; श्री - śrī - a title of respect used before a name, Sri refers to Devi, Mahadeva together

with the Shakti of Devi is prayed to; महादेव - mahādēva - the greatest of Devas; शम्भो - śambhō - auspiciousness incarnate;

Hence my aparādha (offence) should be pardoned, Oh Shiva, the greatest of Devas, (Mahadeva) and auspiciousness incarnate (Shambho).

8. ध्यात्वा चित्ते शिवाख्यं प्रचुरतरधनं नैव दत्तं द्विजेभ्यो हव्यं ते लक्षसङ्ख्यैर्हुतवहवदने नार्पितं बीजमन्त्रैः ।

नो तप्तं गाङ्गतीरे व्रतजपनियमैः रुद्रजाप्यं न जप्तं क्षन्तव्यो मेऽपराधः शिव शिव शिव भोः श्री महादेव शम्भो ॥

8. dhyātvā cittē śivākhyam pracurataradhanam naiva dattam dvijēbhyō havyam tē lakṣasaṅkhyairhutavahavadanē nārpitam bījamantraiḥ ।

nō taptam gāṅgatīrē vratajapaniyamaiḥ rudrajāpyam na jap tam kṣantavyō mē'parādhaḥ śiva śiva śiva bhōḥ śrī mahādēva śambhō ॥

This shloka continues with *Karma mārga* aspects, various karmas that we do.

Meaning & Explanation:

ध्यात्वा चित्ते शिवाख्यं प्रचुरतरधनं नैव दत्तं द्विजेभ्यो - dhyātvā cittē śivākhyam pracurataradhanam naiva dattam dvijēbhyō

ध्यात्वा - dhyātvā - having meditated (on Shiva); चित्ते - cittē - in my mind; शिवाख्यं - śivākhyam - Shiva nāma; प्रचुरतर - pracurata - in plenty; धनं - dhanam - wealth; न एव - na eva - not even that; दत्तं - dattam - given in charity; द्विजेभ्यो - dvijēbhyō - to brāhmanas;

Having meditated on Shiva nāma in my mind, I have not even given plenty of wealth in charity to brāhmanas.

Notes:

It is implied that one should meditate Shiva nāma while giving charity to a brāhmana, considering him as Shiva incarnate.

हव्यं ते लक्षसङ्ख्यैर्हुतवहवदने नार्पितं बीजमन्त्रैः - havyam tē lakṣasaṅkhyairhutavahavadanē nārpitam bījamantraiḥ

हव्यं - havyam - what is offered in Agni to Devas; ते - tē - to you; लक्षसङ्ख्यैः - lakṣasaṅkhyaiḥ - in terms of lakhs of numbers; हुतवह - hutavaḥ - agni (carrier of what is offered in *yajña*); वदने - vadanē - in the mouth; न - na - not; अर्पितं - arpitam - given with respect, offered; बीजमन्त्रैः - bījamantraiḥ - With beejā mantras;

I have not offered havyam to you, through the mouth of Agni, along with the chant of lakhs of numbers of beeja mantras.

Notes:

Huta vaḥ means the carrier of what is offered as Āhuti (in yajña). Agni carries these offerings to various Devatas and Pitrus. The Āhuti offered to Devatas is called Havyam while it is called Kavyam when offered to Pitrus. This Havyam can be Samit, Aajyam, Annam etc. which are specific to various hōmams.

Beeja mantras are mantras like Ōṃ (ॐ), Aiṃ (ऐं), Hriṃ (ह्रीं), Kliṃ (क्लीं) etc. Just as a beeja (seed) has the power of the whole tree, these beeja mantras have the entire Shakti (power) of Devata. These mantras have to be received as an upadesha from a competent Guru. Men (Dwijah) are qualified to chant the beeja mantra Ōṃ as they get the upadesha, along with the Gayatri mantra, during upanayanam. Also, as per shāstras, these beeja mantras are prohibited for women.

Adi Shankara is mentioning the aparādha (offence) of not offering havyam along with beeja mantras chanting and seeks Shiva's pardon.

नो तप्तं गाङ्गतीरे व्रतजपनियमैः रुद्रजाप्यं न जप्तं - nō taptam gāngatīrē vratajapaniyamaiḥ rudrajāpyam na japtam

नो तप्तं - nō taptam - not done tapas; गाङ्गतीरे - gāngatīrē - on the banks of Ganga; व्रतजपनियमैः - vratajapaniyamaiḥ - along with the rules of vrata and japa; रुद्रजाप्यं - rudrajāpyam - rudra mantra; न जप्तं - na japtam - not chanted;

I have not done any tapas on the banks of the Ganga, I have not observed any vrata nor I have done any japa as per the niyama (rules), and I have not even chanted Rudra mantras as per the procedure.

Notes:

For every vrata and japa, there are rules. Similarly, japas are also bound by rules. For example, we start Gayatri Japa with certain nyāsa and then do the Japa, and close the japa by upasthāna mantra. Likewise, every japa has its own rules.

क्षन्तव्यो मेऽपराधः शिव शिव शिव भोः श्री महादेव शम्भो - kṣantavyō mē'parādhaḥ śiva bhōḥ śrī mahādēva śambhō

क्षन्तव्यो - kṣantavyō - is to be pardoned; मे - mē - my; अपराधः - aparādhaḥ - faults/offence; शिव - śiva - auspiciousness incarnate and bestower of auspiciousness; भोः - bhōḥ - a word used to call or address a person, like 'sir'; श्री - śrī - a title of respect used before a name, Sri refers to Devi, Mahadeva together with the Shakti of Devi is prayed to; महादेव - mahādēva - the greatest of Devas; शम्भो - śambhō - auspiciousness incarnate;

Hence my aparādha (offence) should be pardoned, Oh Shiva, the greatest of Devas, (Mahadeva) and auspiciousness incarnate (Shambho).

9. नग्नो निःसङ्गशुद्धस्त्रिगुणविरहितो ध्वस्तमोहान्धकारो नासाग्रे न्यस्तदृष्टिर्विदितभवगुणो नैव दृष्टः कदाचित् ।
उन्मन्याऽवस्थया त्वां विगतगतिमतिः शङ्करं न स्मरामि क्षन्तव्यो मेऽपराधः शिव शिव शिव भोः श्री महादेव
शम्भो ॥

nagnō niḥsaṅgaśuddhastriḡuṇavirahitō dhvastamōhāndhakārō nāsāgrē
nyastadr̥ṣṭirviditabhavaguṇō naiva dr̥ṣṭaḥ kadācit |

unmanyā'vasthayā tvāṃ vigatagatimatih̄ śaṅkaraṃ na smarāmi kṣantavyō mē'parādhaḥ śiva śiva
śiva bhōḥ śrī mahādēva śambhō ||

Adi Shankara is describing **Yōga mār̄ga** (Rāja mār̄ga as referred to by Swāmi Vivekānanda) in this and the next Shloka. Yōga mār̄ga is sitting in Yōgāsana and contemplating on Bhagavān with a certain procedure. This can be taught only by a Yōga guru.

Meaning & Explanation:

नग्नो निःसङ्गशुद्धस्त्रिगुणविरहितो ध्वस्तमोहान्धकारो - nagnō niḥsaṅgaśuddhastriḡuṇavirahitō
dhvastamōhāndhakārō

नग्नो - nagnō - naked (pure, without any *upādhi's*); निःसङ्ग - niḥsaṅgaḥ - without any attachments; शुद्धः -
śuddhaḥ - completely pure; त्रिगुण - triḡuṇa - the three guṇas: satva, rajas, tamas; विरहितः - virahitaḥ -
devoid of; ध्वस्त - dhvasta - destroyed; मोह - mōhā - delusion; अन्धकारः - āndhakāraḥ - darkness;

Having destroyed the darkness of delusion, naked, without any attachments, completely pure, and devoid of the three guṇas.

Notes:

Nagna in this context is pure and devoid of Upādhis. Upādhi according to Vedānta is anything other than Parabrahmam. Ex. Body, mind, limbs etc., Upādhis are sort of obstacles in attaining Parabrahmam. We need to get rid of the 'sense of the Upādhis, when one gets rid of the sense of possessing a body, possessing of clothes will become immaterial.

Nissangah means without any attachment to anything other than Parabrahmam. Trigūṇa virahitaḥ means one should be devoid of the three guṇas - satva, rajas and tamas. These three guṇas are part of Māya. Satva refers to shānti (peace of mind), Rajas refers to always being active and restless, and Tamas is either sleep or indulge in himsa (evil activities / bad things). Adi Shankara mentions here that one should not have these three guṇas (even the Satva guṇa!). Satva is desirable out of the three guṇas, Rajas and Tamas are non-desirable but are needed for human life. The intention here is though they are needed for human life, one should not associate with those undesirable guṇas. When one is seated in yōga, they have to forget the physical existence (body) and forget Rajas and Tamas qualities

(don't be active, don't go to sleep, don't think of evil) but they can resort to Shānti. Eventually, one should get over the mind and reach Parabrahmam, leaving behind even the satva guṇa to attain the Parabrahmam by becoming triguṇavirahitah (त्रिगुण विरहितः).

Dhvasta mōhā āndhakāraḥ - Having destroyed the darkness of the delusion. Here delusion refers to multiple notions - assuming that one's body is real, that one knows something, that one is different from Parabrahmam, that the world around is real etc. These notions need to be destroyed.

नासाग्रे न्यस्तदृष्टिर्विदितभवगुणो नैव दृष्टः कदाचित् - nāsāgrē nyastadr̥ṣṭirviditabhavaguṇō naiva dr̥ṣṭaḥ kadācit

नास - nāsa - nose; अग्रे - agrē - in the front; न्यस्त - nyast - having kept; दृष्टि - dr̥ṣṭi - sight; विदित - vidita - having known; भव - bhava - your (Parameshwara); गुणो - guṇō - qualities; न एव - na eva - not even; दृष्टः - dr̥ṣṭaḥ - seen; कदाचित् - kadācit - at least once;

Having known your qualities, when I concentrated my mind keeping my eyes at the tip of my nose, I have never seen you.

The technique/procedure of focussing (keeping the sight on the tip of the nose) in yogāsana is explained in Vedas and Srimad Bhagavad Gita Chapter 6 (Verse 12 & 13) Dhyāna Yōga).

तत्रैकाग्रं मनः कृत्वा यतचित्तेन्द्रियक्रियः |
उपविश्यासने युञ्ज्याद्योगमात्मविशुद्धये ||
समं कायशिरोग्रीवं धारयन्नचलं स्थिरः |
सम्प्रेक्ष्य नासिकाग्रं स्वं दिशश्चानवलोकयन् ||

tatraikāgraṁ manaḥ kṛtvā yata-chittendriya-kriyaḥ
upaviśhyāsane yuñjyād yogam ātma-viśuddhaye
samaṁ kāya-śhiro-grīvaṁ dhārayann achalaṁ sthiraḥ
samprekṣhya nāsikāgraṁ svaṁ diśhaśh chānavalokayan

Meaning: Firmly on the seat in the required aasana, the yōgi should strive to purify the mind by focusing it in meditation with one-pointed concentration, controlling all thoughts and activities. He must hold the body, neck, and head firmly in a straight line, and gaze at the tip of the nose, without allowing the eyes to wander.

Bhava here refers to Parameshwara. When you are in the yōga state, when you are focussing on the tip of your nose, you should be focussing only on the qualities of Parameshwara. Eventually, you should get over this thought and should become one with Parameshwara.

Adi Shankara points to the aparādha (offence) of not performing the yōga as described above and seeks pardon.

उन्मन्याऽवस्थया त्वां विगतगतिमतिः शङ्करं न स्मरामि - unmanyā'avasthayā tvāṃ vigatagatimatih śaṅkaraṃ na smarāmi

उन्मन्या - unmanyā - excited, perplexed, agitated; अवस्थया - avasthayā - in a state; त्वां - tvāṃ - you; विगतगति मतिः – vigatagati matih - intellect has gone in a wrong route; शङ्करं - śaṅkaraṃ - of Shankara; न स्मरामि - na smarāmi – do not think of;

My mind has become excited, my intellect has gone in a wrong route, and in such a state, I do not think of you, Shankara.

Notes:

Unmanyā avasthayā is explained in two contexts here. Unmanyā generally means excited, perplexed, raising above the mind. I sat for yōga, and I should have followed the path as described earlier (in line two) but instead, I started thinking of mundane things, started thinking of everything other than you.

Another meaning is, mind reaching “beyond the mind” - which is the state of Samādhi. This is a desirable state where one crosses the portals of the mind and become one with Parameshwara.

This shloka sums up the state of mind you should have when you start sitting in yōga.

क्षन्तव्यो मेऽपराधः शिव शिव शिव भोः श्री महादेव शम्भो - kṣantavyō mē'aparādhaḥ śiva śiva śiva bhōḥ śrī mahādēva śambhō

क्षन्तव्यो - kṣantavyō - is to be pardoned; मे - mē - my; अपराधः - aparādhaḥ - faults/offence; शिव - śiva - auspiciousness incarnate and bestower of auspiciousness; भोः - bhōḥ - a word used to call or address a person, like 'sir'; श्री - śrī - a title of respect used before a name, Sri refers to Devi, Mahadeva together with the Shakti of Devi is prayed to; महादेव - mahādēva - the greatest of Devas; शम्भो - śambhō - auspiciousness incarnate;

Hence my aparādha (offence) should be pardoned, Oh Shiva, the greatest of Devas, (Mahadeva) and auspiciousness incarnate (Shambho).

10. स्थित्वा स्थाने सरोजे प्रणवमयमरुत्कुम्भिते सूक्ष्ममार्गे शान्ते स्वान्ते प्रलीने प्रकटितविभवे दिव्यरूपे शिवाख्ये ।

लिङ्गाग्रे ब्रह्मवाक्ये सकलतनुगतं शङ्करं न स्मरामि क्षन्तव्यो मेऽपराधः शिव शिव शिव भोः श्री महादेव शम्भो ॥

10. sthitvā sthānē sarōjē praṇavamayamarutkumbhitē sūkṣmamārgē śāntē svāntē pralinē prakṛitavibhavē divyarūpē shivākhyē ।

liṅgāgrē brahmavākyē sakalatanugataṃ śaṅkaraṃ na smarāmi kṣantavyō mē'parādhaḥ śiva śiva śiva bhōḥ śrī mahādēva śambhō ||

Adi Shankara is describing *Kundalini Yōga* in this *shloka*.

Meaning & Explanation:

स्थित्वा स्थाने सरोजे प्रणवमयमरुत्कुम्भिते सूक्ष्ममार्गे - sthitvā sthānē sarōjē praṇavamayamarutkumbhitē sūkṣmamārgē

स्थित्वा - sthitvā - having sat; स्थाने - sthānē - in the right place; सरोजे - sarōjē - in padmāsana; प्रणवमय - praṇavamaya - Omkāramaya; मरुत् - marut - vayu, air; कुम्भिते - kumbhitē - retaining the air inside the body during pranayama; सूक्ष्ममार्गे sūkṣmamārgē - sushumna nadi;

Having sat in the right place in padmāsana, retaining the Pranavamaya air (air, filled with Omkāra) inside the sushumna nādi

Notes:

Adi Shankara has explained the entire Kundalini yōga procedure in one phrase. Kundalini is Shakti coiled in the form of a snake at the base of the spine where moolādhāra chakra is located. Shiva is seated at the sahasrāra chakra located at the top of the head. There are three mārgas or nādis for the passage of breath within our body: ida, pingala, and sushumna. Normally our breath and messages travel through ida and pingala nādis. You should control them and send the message (air, filled with Ōmkāra) through the sushumna nādi (middle nādi), which is the Sūkṣmamārga (very subtle path).

Prānāyama has three main phases: inhalation, exhalation and retainment (kumbhita). That is the essence of how air is sent up through sūkṣma mārga to sahasrāra. During this process, Kundalini shakti passes through six chakras while moving up from moolādhāra chakra to sahasrāra chakra, where it merges with Shiva. This is the special procedure of Kundalini yoga, which has to be learnt from a qualified yōga guru.

शान्ते स्वान्ते प्रलीने प्रकटितविभवे दिव्यरूपे शिवाख्ये - śāntē svāntē pralīnē prakṛṭitavibhavē divyarūpē shivākhyē

शान्ते - śāntē - peaceful; स्व - sva - me; अन्ते - ante - inside; प्रलीने - pralīnē - merged; प्रकटित - prakṛṭita - expressed; विभवे - vibhavē - in all his glory; दिव्यरूपे - divyarūpē - in his divine form; शिवाख्ये - shivākhyē - the entity /shakti named Shiva;

In that process, I attain a peaceful state where Shiva is merged in me, and in all his glory and magnificence, Shiva is expressed inside me in his divine form.

लिङ्गाग्रे ब्रह्मवाक्ये सकलतनुगतं शङ्करं न स्मरामि - liṅgāgrē brahmavākyē sakalatanugataṃ śaṅkaraṃ na smarāmi

लिङ्गाग्रे - liṅgāgrē - at the top of the linga; ब्रह्मवाक्ये - brahmavākyē - Vedavākya or Vedic mantras, e.g. Sri Rudram; सकल तनुगतं – sakala tanugataṃ - all-pervading, present in all living beings; शङ्करं - śaṅkaraṃ - Shankara; न स्मरामि - na smarāmi - do not think of;

And while doing pūja to the top of the Linga with chanting of Sri Rudra mantras, I have not thought of that Shankara who is all-pervading.

Notes:

liṅgāgrē refers to the top of the Linga. Like the Ashwattha tree described in this Shloka, Shivalinga also has the same three Devatas - मूलतो ब्रह्म रूपाय मध्यतो विष्णु रूपिणे अग्रतः शिव रूपाय वृक्ष राजायते नमः/ Moolatho Brahma roopaya, madhyatho Vishnu roopine, Agrathaḥ shiva roopaya Vruksha rajaya the Namaḥ. That is, at the base he is Brahma, at the centre he is Vishnu, at the top he is Shiva. The Linga pūja can be the worship of external Shiva Linga or mānasa pūja.

Vedas are the very life-breath of Parabrahman so Vedic mantras are equated to Brahman.

Adi Shankara refers to two types of achieving Shiva through this Shloka:

- (1) *Having sat in padmāsana, practising kundalini procedure retaining the pranavamaya air inside the sushumna nādi (kumbhita) and sending the kundalini shakti upwards to sahasrāra where Shiva is seated gloriously inside me in his divine form.*
- (2) *Performing Shivalinga pūja with chanting of Vedavākya and thinking of Shiva who is all-pervading.*

Adi Shankara is seeking pardon for the aparādha (offence) of not following any of these two procedures to attain Shiva.

क्षन्तव्यो मेऽपराधः शिव शिव शिव भोः श्री महादेव शम्भो - kṣantavyō mē'parādhaḥ śiva bhōḥ śrī mahādēva śambhō

क्षन्तव्यो - kṣantavyō - is to be pardoned; मे - mē - my; अपराधः - aparādhaḥ - faults/offence; शिव - śiva - auspiciousness incarnate and bestower of auspiciousness; भोः - bhōḥ - a word used to call or address a person, like 'sir'; श्री - śrī - a title of respect used before a name, Sri refers to Devi, Mahadeva together with the Shakti of Devi is prayed to; महादेव - mahādēva - the greatest of Devas; शम्भो - śambhō - auspiciousness incarnate;

Hence my aparādha (offence) should be pardoned, Oh Shiva, the greatest of Devas, (Mahadeva) and auspiciousness incarnate (Shambho).

**11. हृद्यं वेदान्तवेद्यं हृदयसरसिजे दीप्तमुद्यत्प्रकाशं सत्यं शान्तस्वरूपं सकलमुनिमनः पद्मषण्डैकवेद्यं ।
जाग्रत्स्वप्ने सुषुप्तौ त्रिगुणविरहितं शङ्करं न स्मरामि क्षन्तव्यो मेऽपराधः शिव शिव शिव भोः श्री महादेव
शम्भो ॥**

11. hr̥dyaṃ vēdāntavēdyāṃ hr̥dayasarasijē dīptamudyatprakāśaṃ satyaṃ śāntasvarūpaṃ sakalamunimanaḥ padmaṣaṇḍaikavēdyāṃ |

jāgratsvapnē suṣuptau triṅṅavirahitaṃ śaṅkaraṃ na smarāmi kṣantavyō mē'parādhaḥ śiva bhōḥ śrī mahādēva śambhō ||

Meaning & Explanation:

हृद्यं वेदान्तवेद्यं हृदयसरसिजे दीप्तमुद्यत्प्रकाशं - hr̥dyaṃ vēdāntavēdyāṃ hr̥dayasarasijē dīptamudyatprakāśaṃ

हृद्यं - hr̥dyaṃ - pleasing, lovely, beautiful; वेदान्त वेद्यं - vēdānta vēdyāṃ - known only through Vedānta; हृदयसरसिजे - hr̥dayasarasijē - in the heart lotus; दीप्तम् - dīptam - shining brilliantly; उद्यत्प्रकाशं - udyatprakāśaṃ - rising light;

Shiva is beautiful. He is known only through Vedānta. He shines brilliantly in the heart lotus, as a rising light.

Notes:

Here Adi Shankara is talking of internal assimilation of Shiva, whatever the mārga (path) one may take to attain him. Ultimately one should see Shiva in one's own heart, and the heart should be pure.

The real test of bhakti and gnāna not only lies in performing external Pūja but one should see Parabrahmam in one's heart. These externals (māya) can disappear but what travels along with the Jiva over to the next Janma (life) is the bhāva (feeling that lies in the heart) in the form of Vasanas.

Shiva is very pleasing and is known only through Vedānta, not by any other means. The existence of Parabrahmam is perceived only through Vedānta. Otherwise, one would perceive worldly things through sense organs, assuming what is perceived is real. It is through Vedānta that we realize whatever we consider as truth is unreal, and there is only one truth that is Shiva.

Shiva resides in one's heart lotus as a radiating light. When one concentrates more on this light (meditate more on Shiva), the shine appears to grow and glow more and more and as a rising light, hence it is called udyatprakāśaṃ (उद्यत्प्रकाशं).

सत्यं शान्तस्वरूपं सकलमुनिमनः पद्मषण्डैकवेद्यं - satyaṃ śāntasvarūpaṃ sakalamunimanaḥ padmaṣaṇḍaikavēdyāṃ

सत्यं - satyaṃ - he is the only truth (beyond time and space); शान्तस्वरूपं (śāntasvarūpaṃ) - the embodiment of peace; सकलमुनिमनः - sakalamunimanaḥ - in the minds (hearts, in this context) of all munis or sages; पद्म - padma - lotus; षण्ड - ṣaṇḍa - group; एक - eka - one; वेद्यं - vēdyāṃ - to be known;

He is the only truth. He is shānta-svarūpa. He is to be known in the groups of lotuses of the minds (hearts) of all munis.

Notes:

Adi Shankara gives a rapturous description of what one sees inside the heart. Satyam comes from sat (as part of sat-chit-ananda), meaning ever-present, beyond time and space. Though Shiva is beyond svarūpa, shānta svarupa (embodiment of peace) is generally attributed. He is known by the munis (sages) and resides in their lotus hearts. Adi Shankara is referring to such groups of minds of all munis as lotus groups. The term manas used by Adi Shankara can be applied to heart as well as mind.

जाग्रत्स्वप्ने सुषुप्तौ त्रिगुणविरहितं शङ्करं न स्मरामि - jāgratsvapnē suṣuptau triguṇavirahitaṃ śaṅkaraṃ na smarāmi

जाग्रत् - jāgrata - waking; स्वप्ने - svapne - dreaming; सुषुप्तौ - suṣuptau - deep sleep; त्रिगुण - triguṇa - the three gunas; विरहितं - virahitaṃ - devoid of; शङ्करं - śaṅkaraṃ - Shankara; न स्मरामि - na smarāmi - do not think of;

In waking, dreaming and deep sleep states, I never thought of that Shankara who is devoid of the three gūnas.

Notes:

The Jivas are generally subjected to three states - awake (जाग्रत्), dreaming (स्वप्न) and deep sleep (सुषुप्त). The state of samādhi is beyond these three states, which is experienced by yōgis and gnānis through tapas (meditation). In the state of samādhi, the mind is destroyed and Shiva is experienced as Atmasvarupa. Srimad Bhagavad Gita also describes this as gunātita, a state where the mind is beyond the three gunas: satva, rajas and tamas.

In this shloka, Adi Shankara mentions dīptam udyatprakāśaṃ - which has a similar reference in Nārāyana Sūktam and below is the mantra:

पद्मकोशप्रतीकाशं हृदयं चाप्यधोमुखम्
तस्य मध्ये वह्निशिखा अणीयोर्ध्वा व्यवस्थिताः
नीलतोयदमध्यस्था विद्युल्लेखेव भास्वरा

padmakōśa-prātīkāśaṃ hṛdayaṃ chāpyadhōmukham
tasya madhyē vahniśikhā aṇīyōrdhvā vyavasthitaḥ
nīlatō-yad madhyasthā vidhyullēkhēva bhāsvārā

Where the light shining inside the heart is described as being like a brilliant streak of lightning, i.e., vidhyullēkhēva bhāsvārā.

क्षन्तव्यो मेऽपराधः शिव शिव शिव भोः श्री महादेव शम्भो - kṣantavyō mē'aparādhaḥ śiva bhōḥ śrī mahādēva śambhō

क्षन्तव्यो - kṣantavyō - is to be pardoned; मे - mē - my; अपराधः - aparādhaḥ - faults/offence; शिव - śiva - auspiciousness incarnate and bestower of auspiciousness; भोः - bhōḥ - a word used to call or address a

person, like 'sir'; श्री - śrī - a title of respect used before a name, Sri refers to Devi, Mahadeva together with the Shakti of Devi is prayed to; महादेव - mahādēva - the greatest of Devas; शम्भो - śambhō - auspiciousness incarnate;

Hence my aparādha (offence) should be pardoned, Oh Shiva, the greatest of Devas, (Mahadeva) and auspiciousness incarnate (Shambho).

12. चन्द्रोद्भासितशेखरे स्मरहरे गङ्गाधरे शङ्करे सर्पैर्भूषितकण्ठकर्णविवरे नेत्रोत्थवैश्वानरे ।

दन्तित्वक्कृतसुन्दराम्बरधरे त्रैलोक्यसारे हरे मोक्षार्थं कुरु चित्तवृत्तिममलामन्यैस्तु किं कर्मभिः ॥

12. candrodbhāsitaśēkharē smaraharē gaṅgādhare śaṅkarē sarpaibhūṣitakaṅṭhakarṇavivarē nētroththavaiśvānarē ।

dantitvakkṛtasundarāambaradharē trailokyasārē hare mokṣārthaṃ kuru
cittavṛttimamalāmanyaistu kiṃ karmabhiḥ ॥

So far Adi Shankara was addressing Shiva for pardoning all his transgressions and failings. Now he is addressing chitta or mind and suggests that all chitta-vrittis (modes of mind) should be made pure and directed towards mōksha or ultimate liberation, and away from samsāra.

The first three lines (as per the below numbering) of this shloka are in saptami vibhakti signifying that mōksha lies within Shiva (direct your chitta-vrittis towards Shiva).

Suggested reading order: 4-3-1-2

Meaning & Explanation:

चन्द्रोद्भासितशेखरे स्मरहरे गङ्गाधरे शङ्करे - candrodbhāsitaśēkharē smaraharē gaṅgādhare śaṅkarē

चन्द्र - chandra - moon; उद्भासित - udbhāsita - very much brightened; शेखरे - śēkharē - top of the head; स्मरहरे - smaraharē - one who took away the life of Smara or Manmatha; गङ्गाधरे - gaṅgādhare - one who is holding Ganga; शङ्करे - śaṅkarē - in Shankara or Shiva;

Shankara whose head is very much brightened by Chandra, who took away the life of Manmatha, the one who is holding Ganga on his head.

Notes:

Smaraharē means one who took away the life of smara (Manmatha), with his third eye. Shiva burnt Manmatha to ashes, when Manmatha directed his arrow of flowers at Shiva as pleaded by Devatas, before the avatara of Subrahmanya.

Adi Shankara is describing how Shiva appears and his attributes. Without Chandra we cannot live. Though Surya is the cause of all food grains, the essence of these grains by which living beings are

surviving is the nectarine rays of Chandra. Without Manmatha the world cannot progress. Without Ganga, purification cannot be done.

सर्पैर्भूषितकण्ठकर्णविवरे नेत्रोत्थवैश्वानरे - sarpairbhūṣitakaṅṭhakarṇavivarē nētrothhavaiśvānarē

सर्पैः - sarpaḥ -serpents; भूषित - bhūṣitaḥ - decorated; कण्ठ - kaṅṭha - neck; कर्ण - karṇa - ear; विवरे - vivarē - hole; नेत्र - nētra - eye; उत्थ - utha - rising; वैश्वानरे - vaiśvānarē - Agni

His neck and earholes are decorated by serpents. He is the one with Agni rising from his third eye.

Notes:

Vaiśvānara is another name of Agni. Once Agni took birth as the son of a sage called Viśvānara, and hence he is known as Vaiśvānara. Shiva himself blessed the sage, and a part of Shiva becomes Vaiśvānara. Vaiśvānara is regarded as a very intense amśa (element) of Shiva.

दन्तित्वकृतसुन्दराम्बरधरे त्रैलोक्यसारे हरे - dantitvakkṛtasundarāambaradharē trailokyasārē hare

दन्ति - danti - elephant; त्वचि - tvachi - skin; कृत - kṛta - made of; सुन्दर - sundara - beautiful; अम्बर - ambara - dress; धरे - dharē -wearing; त्रैलोक्य - trailokya - the three worlds; सारे - sārē - the essence of; हरे - harē - in Shiva;

He is wearing a beautiful apparel made of elephant skin. He is the essence of all the three worlds.

Notes:

The elephant skin apparel worn by Shiva is the skin of an asura called Gajāsura who was killed by Shiva. This reminds us that Shiva is always there to destroy our enemies, including the shadripus (kāma, krōdha, lōbha, mōha, mada, mātsarya) which are always present in our minds.

Trailokya sārē hare means Shiva is the essence of all the three worlds and everything else is mithya (unreal) and inessential.

मोक्षार्थं कुरु चित्तवृत्तिममलामन्यैस्तु किं कर्मभिः - mokṣārthaṃ kuru cittavṛttimamalāmanyaistu kiṃ karmabhiḥ

मोक्षार्थं - mokṣārthaṃ - for the sake of moksha; कुरु - kuru - do; चित्तवृत्तिम् - cittavṛttim - modes of the mind; अमलाम् - amalām - stainless, pure; अन्यै - anyaiḥ - other; तु - tu - then; किं - kiṃ - what; कर्मभिः - karmabhiḥ - activities;

Make your chitta-vrittis pure and direct them towards mōksha which lies in Shiva. What is the use of other activities?

13. किं यानेन धनेन वाजिकरिभिः प्राप्तेन राज्येन किं किं वा पुत्रकलत्रमित्रपशुभिर्देहेन गेहेन किम् ।

ज्ञात्वैतत्क्षणभङ्गुरं सपदि रे त्याज्यं मनो दूरतः स्वात्मार्यं गुरुवाक्यतो भज मन श्रीपार्वतीवल्लभम् ॥

13. kiṃ yānēna dhanēna vājikaribhiḥ prāptēna rājyēna kiṃ vā putrakalatramitrapaśubhirdēhēna gēhēna kim |

jñātvaitatkaṣaṇabhaṅguraṃ sapadi rē tyājyaṃ manō dūrataḥ svātmārthaṃ guruvākyatō bhaja mana śrīpārvatīvallabham ||

Meaning & Explanation:

किं यानेन धनेन वाजिकरिभिः प्राप्तेन राज्येन किं - kiṃ yānēna dhanēna vājikaribhiḥ prāptēna rājyēna kiṃ

किं - kiṃ - what; यानेन - yānēna - vehicles; धनेन - dhanēna - wealth; वाजि - vāji- horses; करिभिः - karibhiḥ - elephants; प्राप्तेन - prāptēna - been attained; राज्येन - rājyēna - kingdom; किं - kiṃ - what;

What is the use of vehicles, wealth, horses and elephants, and what is the use of attaining kingdom?

Notes:

Adi Shankara is referring to possessing elephants and horses as proud possessions in the earlier days, similar to property, bank balance, house etc. in the modern era. He is listing them as that of human interest. It is difficult for one to attain kingdom and be the ruler, so the term prāptēna (attain) is used with the word "kingdom". It is implied that Adi Shankara is questioning the efforts towards attaining these temporary worldly possessions along with the Kingdom instead of focussing chitta towards svātmārthaṃ.

किं वा पुत्रकलत्रमित्रपशुभिर्देहेन गेहेन किम् - kiṃ vā putrakalatramitrapaśubhirdēhēna gēhēna kim

किं - kiṃ - what; वा - vā - or/else; पुत्र - putrā -son; कलत्र - kalatra - spouse; मित्र - mitra - friend; पशुभिः - paśubhiḥ - cattle; देहेन - dēhēna - body; गेहेन - gēhēna - house; किम् - kim - what ;

Or what else is the use of son, spouse, friend and cattle? What is the use of this body and house?

Notes:

All worldly relations and possessions are highly temporary and are attached only to the physical body. And that physical body is controlled by chitta/mind, though it is actually holding the mind. Here, Adi Shankara is suggesting to direct the chitta towards svātmā by using the physical body as a mere vehicle, rather than clinging to the aforementioned worldly relations and possessions.

ज्ञात्वैतत्क्षणभङ्गुरं सपदि रे त्याज्यं मनो दूरतः - jñātvaitatkaṣaṇabhaṅguraṃ sapadi rē tyājyaṃ manō dūrataḥ

ज्ञात्वा - jñātva - knowing; एतत् - etat - all this; क्षण - kṣaṇa - in a moment; भङ्गुरं - bhaṅguraṃ - destructible; सपदि - sapadi - instantly; रे - rē - a word to address someone close to you, like O!; त्याज्यं - tyājyaṃ - should be abandoned; मनो - manō - mind; दूरतः - dūrataḥ - at a distance;

O mind! Knowing that all this is destructible in a moment, you should instantly abandon these things and leave them at a great distance.

स्वात्मार्थं गुरुवाक्यतो भज मन श्रीपार्वतीवल्लभम् - svātmārthaṃ guruvākyatō bhaja mana śrīpārvatīvallabham

स्वात्मार्थं - svātmārthaṃ - for the sake of finding one's own *ātma*; गुरुवाक्यतो - guruvākyatō - as instructed by Guru; भज - bhaja - worship; मन - mana - mind; श्रीपार्वतीवल्लभम् - śrī pārvatīvallabham - beloved of Parvati (Shiva);

For the sake of finding your own *ātma*, as instructed by Guru, worship Shiva, the beloved of Parvati in your mind.

Notes:

Adi Shankara is bringing in the importance of Guru in the pursuit of svātma. One would not know or experience the bliss of ātma due to its subtle nature. One could find or experience such ātma (svātma) by merely following Guru's instructions to attain Parabrahmam. There are many paths to attain Parabrahmam – Karma mārga, Bhakti mārga, Gnāna mārga, Dhyāna mārga, Rāja mārga etc. Only a qualified Guru would be able to understand which of these mārgas suit best based on the present state etc; of the disciple. So, he could guide the disciple in the right mārga to attain Parabrahmam. Without Guru, no progress can be achieved.

All the above said mārgas, converge and will lead the sādḥaka to explore within self in search of ātma, rather than searching in the outside world (like visiting temples, doing pūja etc.).

**14. पौरोहित्यं रजनिचरितं ग्रामणीत्वं नियोगो माठापत्यं ह्यनृतवचनं साक्षिवादः परान्नम् ।
ब्रह्मद्वेषः खलजनरतिः प्राणिनां निर्दयत्वं मा भूदेवं मम पशुपते जन्मजन्मान्तरेषु ॥**

14. paurohityaṃ rajanicaritaṃ grāmaṇītvam niyogo māṭhāpatyaṃ hyanṛtavacanaṃ sāksivādaḥ parānnaṃ ।

brahmadveṣaḥ khalajanaratiḥ prāṇināṃ nirdayatvaṃ mā bhūdevaṃ mama paśupate janmajanmāntareṣu ॥

In this shloka, Adi Shankara is listing a few duties/activities that are necessary societal functions (duties like paurohityam and māṭhāpatyaṃ) and that is forbidden by the Dharmashāstra and pleading Shiva

not to allow those to happen. One should understand the subtle point in this plea of listing both these types of duties in the same shloka.

Meaning & Explanation:

पौरोहित्यं रजनिचरितं ग्रामणीत्वं नियोगो - paurohityam rajanacaritam grāmaṇītvam niyogo

पौरोहित्यं - paurohityam - profession of a purohita or family priest; रजनिचरितं - rajanacaritam - night duty; ग्रामणीत्वं - grāmaṇītvam - being a village head; नियोगो - niyogo - employment, doing a job under somebody;

The profession of a purohita, night duties, position of a village head, being employed by someone

Notes:

The word purohita is derived from two words pura and hita. While Hita means what is good and beneficial, Pura means in advance. So, Purohita means one who senses the benefits in advance and advises what brings good. Vasishtha is a well-known purohita (family priest) of the solar dynasty during, before and after Shri Rama's time. Adi Shankara appeals to Shiva not to allot the profession of a purohita, since that accumulates sins of disciples (along with the meritorious deeds of the disciples). This rule also applies to the relationship of husband and wife and to that of the king and his subjects. Dharmashāstra mentions that whatever the religious merits earned by the followers (wife, shishyas, subjects) are all entirely theirs. However, half of their sins would belong to the leader (Guru or Husband or King). This is because of the failure of the leader in guiding the follower.

Dharmashāstra prescribes certain prayaschittas (repentance) like chanting of Vedas and Gāyatri mantra to get rid of these sins (doshas). There are certain dānas which are taken by special brāhmanas eg., Taila (oil) Pātra. As prescribed by shāstra, taking dāna is one of the six duties of a brāmhana. Other duties include giving dāna, studying and teaching Vedas, performing yajña and making others perform yajña. So, accepting a Taila Pātra as dāna is just performing the duty of brāmhana/ Purohita. The Purohita will have to do certain prayaschittas (repentance) by chanting more Gāyatri for getting rid of accumulated sins due to the dānas accepted by him.

Adi Shankara's plea should be taken in a broader sense, not in a limited sense. He does not want to be allotted these duties so that he can focus on the pursuit of svātma.

Mentioning about rajanacaritam (performing night duties), Adi Shankara is pleading not to allocate night duties, as this prevents performing religious activities during day time. All religious activities such as Pūja, Havans etc., are performed mainly during the forenoon. We do not do religious activities during the nighttime.

Adi Shankara goes further and pleads Shiva not to allocate niyogo (employed by others), since that hindrance freedom. A brāhmana's main duty is to perform spiritual activities freely (svatantra). Being employed, one would lose the freedom to perform spiritual activities and attain Parabrahmam.

माठापत्यं ह्यनृतवचनं साक्षिवादः परात्रम् - māṭhāpatyaṃ hyanṛtavacanaṃ sāksivādaḥ parānnaṃ

माठापत्यं - māṭhāpatyaṃ - being a māṭhādipathi, i.e. head of a māṭhā; हि - hi - also; अनृत - anṛta - lies, falsehood; वचनं - vacanaṃ - speaking; साक्षिवादः - sāksivādaḥ - testifying as a witness; परात्रम् - parānnaṃ - taking food in somebody else's house;

Being a māthapati, speaking lies, testifying as a witness and taking food in somebody else's house.

Notes:

Adi Shankara further lists certain other duties and pleads not to allocate them. They include being a māthadipati, a speaker of lies, an eater of food from others (Parānnaṃ), and sāksivāda.

In general, a māthadipati acquires the sins done by the shishyas. A brahma-gnāni, like the Kanchi ācharya(s), does not acquire such sins (overriding all other rules). A māthadipati will have a pursuit of gnāna, Veda pāṛāyana etc., (as prayaschitta) and not indulge in pursuit of worldly activities such as general public. Speaking of lies and supporting falsehood are few other sins that are enlisted by Adi Shankara.

Mentioning about sāksivāda (witness and testifying), a sākshi (witness) reports things based on what was seen and heard, which may not sometimes be the truth. Hence, they earn the sin of speaking untruth. So, Adi Shankara pleads not to get indulged in sāksivāda.

Parānnaṃ means taking food in somebody else's house. As a matter of āchara, our forefathers used to take food only in designated places (e.g., a relative or a friend's house) apart from their own home, where āchara is maintained.

ब्रह्मद्वेषः खलजनरतिः प्राणिनां निर्दयत्वं - brahmadveṣaḥ khala janaratiḥ prāṇināṃ nirdayatvaṃ

ब्रह्मद्वेषः - brahmadveṣaḥ - hating a brāhmana or Vedas; खल - khala - evil; जन - jana - people; रतिः - ratiḥ - love; प्राणिनां - prāṇināṃ - living beings; निर्दयत्वं - nirdayatvaṃ - being cruel;

Hating a brāhmana, company of evil people, being cruel to living beings

Notes:

Brāhmanas stand for Vedas, so hating Vedas is like hating brāhmanas. There are systems that do not accept Vedas – Buddhism, Jainism etc., Hating Brāhmana is equivalent to hating Veda and all other religious activities which are referred to as Brāhmana-dveṣa.

Prāṇi includes all living beings, even insects like flies and mosquitoes, which we want to get rid of. Adi Shankara is pleading not to be cruel to living beings.

मा भूदेवं मम पशुपते जन्मजन्मान्तरेषु - mā bhūdevaṃ mama paśupate janmajanmāntareṣu

मा - mā - let it not; भूत् - bhūt - happen; एवं - evaṃ - this way; मम - mama - to me; पशुपते - paśupate - O Lord of all living beings; जन्मजन्मान्तरेषु - janmajanmāntareṣu - in this and future births;

All that I have described, let it not happen to me, not only in this birth but also in future births. O Pashupati, please accept my plea.

Notes:

One of the beautiful names of Shiva is Pashupati (पशूनां पतिः Pashunām patiḥ), meaning Lord of all living beings. In Shaiva Siddhānta there are three principles: pashu, pāsha, pati. All pashus (living beings) are bound by pāsha, ropes of attachment. It is Pashupathi who breaks/cuts these bonds and liberates them.

15. आयुर्नश्यति पश्यतां प्रतिदिनं याति क्षयं यौवनं प्रत्यायान्ति गताः पुनर्न दिवसाः कालो जगद्भक्षकः ।
लक्ष्मीस्तोयतरङ्गभङ्गचपला विद्युच्चलं जीवितं तस्मान्मां शरणागतं करुणया त्वं रक्ष रक्षाधुना ॥

15. āyurnaśyati paśyatām pratidinaṃ yāti kṣayaṃ yauvanaṃ pratyāyānti gatāḥ punarna divasāḥ
kālō jagadbhakṣakaḥ ।

lakṣmīstōyatarāṅgabhaṅgacapalā vidyuccalam jīvitaṃ tasmānmām śaraṅāgataṃ karuṇaya tvam
rakṣa rakṣādhunā ॥

Meaning & Explanation:

आयुर्नश्यति पश्यतां प्रतिदिनं याति क्षयं यौवनं - āyurnaśyati paśyatām pratidinaṃ yāti kṣayaṃ
yauvanaṃ

आयुः - āyuh - life; नश्यति - naśyati - getting destroyed; पश्यतां - paśyatām - even as we are seeing;
प्रतिदिनं - pratidinaṃ - everyday; याति - yāti - attains; क्षयं - kṣayaṃ - decay; यौवनं - yauvanaṃ - youth;

Life is getting destroyed even as we look on, and youth is decaying every day.

Notes:

Here Adi Shankara is listing a few of the transient things that one gets attached to and pleading with Shiva to shower his compassion by developing detachment on these things.

As a sādḥaka, one gets attached to youth and prays for longer life. Though a longer life would help during the pursuit of spiritual growth, one should have a lesser attachment to life and should be prepared to die any minute. With every breath, the life span is getting reduced, and one would not know what life the Jīva would be taking after this life, as the thought process and the spiritual inclination in the next life could not be known.

So, one should focus on the spiritual pursuit, and not delay any further as life gets decayed every second.

प्रत्यायान्ति गताः पुनर्न दिवसाः कालो जगद्भक्षकः - pratyāyānti gatāḥ punarna divasāḥ kālō
jagadbhakṣakaḥ

प्रत्यायान्ति - pratyāyānti - return; गताः - gatāḥ - gone; पुनः - punaḥ - again; न - na - not; दिवसाः - divasāḥ - days; कालो - kālō - time; जगद्भक्षकः - jagadbhakṣakaḥ - devourer of the universe;

Days that are already gone do not return as time is the devourer of this universe.

लक्ष्मीस्तोयतरङ्गभङ्गचपला विद्युच्चलं जीवितं - lakṣmīstōyataraṅgabhaṅgacapalā vidyuccalam jīvitam

लक्ष्मी - lakṣmī - wealth; तोय - tōya - water; तरङ्ग - taraṅga - waves; भङ्ग - bhaṅga - destroy; चपला - capalā - transient; विद्युत् - vidyut - lighting; चलम् - calam - inconstant ; - जीवितं - jīvitam - life;

Wealth is transient and gets destroyed just like the waves of water, and life is transient like lightning.

Notes:

In the sea or river, waves of water are continuously getting destroyed upon reaching the shore. Similarly, time and wealth are very transient and get destroyed in a minute. Devi Lakshmi is said to be wavery, inconstant like the waves of water, she doesn't remain with you forever.

Just as the wealth, one's life is as inconstant as the lightning. So, one should develop a sense of detachment from such fickle attractions.

There's a reference to this phrase in Mahā Bhārata (Aryana Parvam), where Yudhistira answers to a Yaksha's question - किं आश्चर्यं - Kim Āścaryam? - What is the surprising thing in the world?

Yudhistira answers to this question by saying:

अहन्यहनि भूतानि गच्छन्तीह यमालयम् ।
शेषाः स्थावरमिच्छन्ति किमाश्चर्यमतः परम् ॥

*Ahanyahani bhutaani gacchantih Yamalayam ।
Sheshah sthawarmicchanti kimaascharyamatah param ॥*

There is no greater surprise than people thinking of a long life even after witnessing that people near and dear leaving this world. What greater wonder can there be? Yudhistira's reference to life could be described by vidyuccalam jīvitam (life is as fickle as lightning).

तस्मान्मां शरणागतं करुणया त्वं रक्ष रक्षाधुना - tasmānmām śaraṅāgataṁ karuṇaya tvaṁ rakṣa rakṣādhunā

तस्मात् - tasmāt - therefore; माम् - mām - me; शरणागतं - śaraṅāgataṁ - taken refuge in you; करुणया - karuṇaya - with compassion; त्वं - tvaṁ - you; रक्ष - rakṣa - protect me; रक्ष - rakṣa - protect me अधुना -- adhunā - right now;

Therefore, please show compassion and protect me, who has taken refuge in you. Please protect me right now.

Notes:

Adi Shankara is emphasizing Sharanāgati in this latter part of shloka. Sharanāgati or surrendering to the will of the Lord is very important.

There is a famous shloka that describes Sharanāgati:

*आनुकूल्यस्य संकल्पः प्रातिकूल्यस्य वर्जनम् ।
रक्षिष्यतीति विश्वासो गोप्तृत् वरणं तथा ।
आत्मनिक्षेप कार्पण्ये षड्विधा शरणागतिः ॥*

*Ānukūlasya sankalpaḥ pratikūlyasya varjanam
Rakṣiṣyati iti viśvāso goprtvavaraṇam tatā
Ātmanikṣepa kārpaṇye Śadvidha saraṇāgatiḥ ॥*

Meaning: *The six divisions of surrender are: Determining to do only those acts which are pleasing to the Lord, rejecting unfavourable things, submitting to Bhagavan that he alone is the protector, self-effacement, and humility.*

According to the above shloka, there are six aspects of Sharanāgati as explained below:

- 1. What is anukūla (pleasing) for Bhagavān should be the Sādhaka's (devotee's) sankalpa, according to dharmashāstra. Sādhaka's desire should align with the desire of the lord.*
- 2. What is pratikūla (displeasing) for Bhagavān should be abandoned, i.e., what is prohibited by dharmashāstra. Sādhaka should not follow and practice what is displeasing to the lord.*
- 3. Sādhaka should have complete faith in Bhagavan's protection. That is the essence of sharanāgati. (Rakṣiṣyati iti viśwasaḥ - He is going to protect)*
- 4. Sādhaka should go to Bhagavān's sannidhi and declare openly that He is the protector. A thought that is deemed to be true in your mind may be overridden by other thoughts. However, once a thought is declared in the Sannidhi of the lord, the chances of that thought getting registered in the mind would be higher.*
- 5. Sādhaka should deem to be in the complete protection of Bhagavān, i.e. one should have no will of his own. Ex., Hanuamān never had a will of his own. He always said that whatever he could do is per the will of Sri Rāma. Conducting yourself as a stooge of the lord.*
- 6. Sādhaka should become kripāna/deena, i.e. feel meek and humble in front of Bhagavān, as all powers are from Him.*

Adi Shankara is ending this Stotra by declaring his surrender to Shiva and pleading with him to shower his compassionate protection without further delay.

॥ शिवापराध क्षमापण स्तोत्रम् सम्पूर्णम् ॥

॥ Śivāparādha Kṣamāpaṇa Stotram Sampurnam ॥