Shivaparadha-kshamapana stotra

First, the sin due to attachment to karma brings me to the womb of a mother. Then, the heat of the womb boils (me) exceedingly in the impure place containing excrement and urine. Who can describe the suffering that afflict (me) exceedingly in that place! O Shiva! O Shiva! O Shiva!
O MahAdeva! O Shambhu! Forgive my offense!

There is an excess of suffering in infancy and childhood. The body is agitated by (frequent) urination and passing of stools. And there is a desire for breast-feeding. There is no strength in the organs. Many kinds of worms, parasites, insects, etc. born of Your mAyA keep biting and piercing me. Due to suffering from numerous ailments, I keep crying. (But) I do not remember (You) Shankara (even then)! (Therefore,) O Shiva! O Shiva! O MahAdeva! O Shambhu! Forgive my offense!

Shri Abhinava Vidyateertha, (Divine Discourses, page 91) says that there is a causal relation chain that runs as follows:

mithyAjnAna -> doshha -> pravR^itti -> janma -> duHkha

Shivaparadha-kshamapana stotram
MithyAGYAna leads to defects (attachment, aversion, and delusion), defects lead to activity, activity leads to (the next) birth, and birth leads to dukkha - sorrow, pain and suffering.

The root cause of this dukkha is mithyAGYAna.

From this, it follows that everyone who is born in this world does so because of mithyAGYAna or erroneous knowledge. And it also follows that everyone who is born will undergo dukkha.

What is this mithyAGYAna? Shri Abhinava Vidyateertha says:

atasmin.h tadbudhiH - mithyAGYAnam.h

MithyAGYAna is perceiving something in what it is not. Thinking the body to be the Self is mithyAGYAna.

Once we identify the Self with the body, we will be subjected to defects. The body will be attracted to certain things that are considered desirable and averse to other things that are considered undesirable. Again, things are classified as desirable and undesirable because of delusion. We strive to achieve desirable things and avoid the undesirable things. This "striving" is the pravR^itti marga or karma-marga. Because of karma and depending on whether we performed good or bad karmas, we have to take birth again in different forms. And birth implies suffering. We perform more karmas in that birth leading to yet another birth, and so on. The cycle continues.

The cycle can be broken by eliminating the root cause, mithyAGYAna.

dukkhanmapravR^ittidoshhamithyAGYAnAnAM taduttarottarApAye tadanantarApAyAdapavargaH |

Among sorrow, birth, activity, defects, and mithyAGYAna, by eliminating each element, the preceding one is removed and thereby, liberation results.

प्रौढः चौवनयो विषयविषये: पद्मभिमन्मसन्धौ
दृष्टे नन्दोऽविवेकः सुतानलयुतनिस्वादसौल्ये निषणः।
शैवतीचिन्ताविविहीनं मम हृदयमद्वा मानगवाभिः प्रभु

शिवायापाधक्षमापणस्तोत्रम्
When I mature into my youth, the five serpents called sense objects bite me in my vital organs. I lose all discrimination (viveka) and become addicted to enjoying the (fleeting) pleasures of wealth, wife, and children. Alas! Even then, my mind is devoid of thoughts of Shiva, but filled with great pride and arrogance! O Shiva! O MahAdeva! O Shambhu! Forgive my offense!

And in my old age, my organs lose their vitality and sharpness. I am miserable, subjected to the three kinds of miseries (tApatraya - Adhidaivika, Adhibhautika and AdhyAtmika) from sins, diseases, and losses, and my body is decayed due to loss of youth. Even in this sorry state, my mind wanders about being distracted by unreal things, delusion, and vain desires but is devoid of thoughts of (You) dhUrjaTi (One who wears matted locks of hair on the head)! O Shiva! O MahAdeva! O Shambhu! Forgive my offense!

I am unable to perform the smArta karmas (nitya karmas) even though omission of even a single step of such karmas is extremely sinful. (While I cannot even do the smArta karmas) how can I (defend my non-performance of) the (obligatory) shrauta karmas that are enjoined for the dvijas and

शिवापराधक्षमापणस्तोत्रम्
are essential for attaining Brahman? I do not have any respect for dharma, nor do I inquire into shravaNa (hearing the shruti) and manana (reasoning about and reflexion on the shruti texts). What can I contemplate on (nididhyAsitavyam.h) ? O Shiva! O MahAdeva! O Shambhu! Forgive my offense!

Taking a bath early in the morning, I have never brought the water of the GangA river to perform Your abhishheka (bathing ceremony). And I have never gone to the dense forest to bring Bilva leaves for Your pUjA. Nor have I offered You a garland of lotuses grown in the lake or fragrant flowers of any kind. O Shiva! O MahAdeva! O Shambhu! Forgive my offense!

I have never performed the bathing ceremony of Your liN^ga with milk and honey, ghee, yogurt, and sugar (paJNchAmR^ita-abhishheka). I have never anointed the liN^ga with sandalwood paste. Nor have I worshipped You with dhattUra flowers, incense, and lights of camphor. I have never offered You naivedya (food offered to God) consisting of various dainty delicacies. O Shiva! O MahAdeva! O Shambhu! Forgive my offense!

O Shiva! O MahAdeva! O Shambhu! Forgive my offense!

श्रात्वा प्रत्यूषकाले कृपनविधिविधानो नाहूं गाज्तोयं
पूजार्थं वा कदाचिदतरजगनात्सवण्डबिष्यदस्त्यानि।
नानीता पद्माला सरसि विकसिता गन्धारुपये त्वदर्थं
क्षत्वायो मेः प्रापाः शिवशिवशिवो श्रीमहादेवशाम्भो॥ ६ ॥

I have never performed the bathing ceremony of Your liN^ga with milk and honey, ghee, yogurt, and sugar (paJNchAmR^ita-abhishheka). I have never anointed the liN^ga with sandalwood paste. Nor have I worshipped You with dhattUra flowers, incense, and lights of camphor. I have never offered You naivedya (food offered to God) consisting of various dainty delicacies. O Shiva! O MahAdeva! O Shambhu! Forgive my offense!

ध्यात्वा चित्ते शिवार्थं प्रत्युत्सर्गमने नेव दर्तं द्विनेश्यो
हत्वं ते लक्षसङ्ग्वेयत्वहवन्दनेन नारितं बीजमच्छे।

शिवापराधशर्मापिष्कमनुष्टोत्रम्
I have not donated extensive wealth to BrahmaNas, contemplating on Shiva. I have never offered oblations in agni accompanied by one lakh (a hundred thousand) utterances of Your bija-mantra. I have never performed austerities on the banks of the Ganges river, following the rules for Vratas (observances) and japa, accompanied by the recitation of the shrI-rudra-adhyAya and other Vedic hymns. O Shiva! O MahAdeva! O Shambhu! Forgive my offense!

I do not remember Shankara, the Inner Controller (antaryAmin) of all, being situated in the thousand-petaled lotus (sahasrAra chakra) where the subtle energy rises, where the prANas merge into the praNava sound (AUM), where the purports of the veda-vAkyas merge into the Supreme Reality that is fully manifested as being full of brilliance and peace. O Shiva! O MahAdeva! O Shambhu! Forgive my offense!

I have never had a vision of You, after becoming completely detached, naked, beyond the three guNas, having destroyed the darkness of delusion, having concentrated my gaze on the tip of the nose, and having known Your attributes. Nor have I ever remembered, even in an agitated state, You Shankara, who are completely untainted by the (evils) of Kali Yuga. O Shiva! O MahAdeva! O Shambhu! Forgive my offense!
What is the use of other karmas? In order to attain MokSha, make the mind’s activities firm in Shiva, on whose head the moon shines, who is the destroyer of kama, who bears the gana, who is Shankara (bestower of happiness), whose neck and ears are adorned by serpents, from whose eyes fire emanates, who wears the hide of an elephant as a garment, and who is the essence of the three worlds.

What is the use of all this wealth, horses, elephants? What is the use of even having a kingdom (ie. power and wealth)? What is the use of having sons, wife, friends, animals, houses? What is the use of the body? Knowing all this to be liable to perish in a moment, O mind, renounce it from a distance immediately! In order to realize your Self, follow the advise of the Guru and worship the Lord of PArvatI, Shankara.

Even as one is seeing it, day by day, life is being shortened and my youth is being reduced! Days that are gone will never come back! Time is devourer of the world! lakShmI (wealth) is wavering like the waves of
water (with crests and troughs). And life itself is uncertain and of short duration like lightning. Therefore, You who provide refuge to those who approach You for refuge, protect me even now who have approached You for refuge!

कर्मचरणकृतं वाक्रायं कर्मज्ञं वा
श्रवणनयनजं वा मानसं वापराधम्।
विहितमविहितं वा सविमेतवत्क्षमस्व
जय जय करुणाव्ये श्रीमहादेव शाम्भो ॥ १४ ॥

With my hands, legs, words, body, actions, by hearing, eyes, or even in my mind alone, whether as part of an enjoined act or as a forbidden act, whatever offense I have committed, forgive me! Victory be to You, O Ocean of compassion! O MahAdeva! O Shambhu!

॥ इति श्रीमच्छुक्करभगवतपदवरिचितं शिवापाराधक्षमाप्पणस्तोत्रं संपूर्णम् ॥

Translated by Anand Hudli