

**Satsanga with Sri Swami Viditatmananda Saraswati**  
**Arsha Vidya Gurukulam**

**Bhaja Govindam – Verse 7**

Now we come to the seventh verse where, again, the life of a common man is recounted. There is a sense of regret at the way in which man spends his life, or squanders away the opportunity to achieve his goal.

बालस्तावत्क्रीडासक्तः तरुणस्तावत्तरुणीसक्तः ।

वृद्धस्तावच्चिन्तासक्तः परमे ब्रह्मणि कोऽपि न सक्तः ॥

*bālastāvatkṛīḍāsaktaḥ taruṇastāvattaruṇīsaktaḥ,*  
*vṛddhastāvaccintāsaktaḥ parame brahmaṇi ko'pi na saktaḥ.*

The childhood slips away in attachment to playfulness. Youth passes away in attachment to woman. Old age passes away in worrying about many things. Alas, there is hardly anyone who wants to be lost in *parabrahman*.

*Bālastāvatkṛīḍāsaktaḥ.* As a *bālaḥ* or child, he is engaged in sport and play. Childhood slips away in this. *Taruṇastāvattaruṇīsaktaḥ.* As a young man, his attention is totally taken up by the *taruṇi* or young woman. Youth also passes, thus, in the enjoyment of sensuous pleasures. *Vṛddhastāvaccintāsaktaḥ.* When the man becomes old, his mind is full of worries and anxieties. *Parame brahmaṇi ko'pi na saktaḥ.* Alas, at no stage of life is he *parame brahmaṇi saktaḥ*, devoted to the *parabrahman*, Govinda. People have time for all kinds of things, but not for *parambrahman*.

**We fail to think of the Lord at all stages of our life**

In one of his famous *stotras*, Śrī Śaṅkarācārya seeks the pardon of Lord Śiva for having failed to do what he should have done at every stage of his life. He says:

आदौ कर्मप्रसङ्गात्कलयति कलुषं मातृकुक्षौ स्थितं मां

विण्मूत्रामेध्यमध्ये कथयति नितरां जाठरो जातवेदाः ।

यद्यद्वै तत्र दुःखं व्यथयति नितरां शक्यते केन वक्तुं

क्षन्तव्यो मेऽपराधः शिव शिव शिव भो श्री महादेव शम्भो ॥ १ ॥

*ādau karma-prasaṅgāt-kalayati kaluṣaṁ mātrī-kuṅksau sthitam mām viṅ-mūtrā-*  
*medhya-madhye kathayati nitarām jāṭharo jātavedāḥ, yad-yadvai tatra duḥkham*

*vyatha-yati nitarām śakyate kena vaktuṃ kṣantavyo me'parādhaḥ śiva śiva śiva bho śrī mahādeva śambho.*

Even before I saw the light of this world, my sins from previous births, through which I passed because of desire for the fruit of my deeds, punished me as I lay in my mother's womb. There I was boiled in the midst of unclean things. Who can describe the pain that afflicts the child in its mother's womb? Therefore, Oh Śiva! Oh Mahādeva! Oh Śambuḥ! Forgive me, I pray for my transgressions [Śivāparādhakṣamāpaṇa Stotram, 1].

This *aparādhaḥ*, this fault of omission on my part, should be pardoned, *kṣantavyaḥ*. There was a time when I was in the womb of my mother because of my past *karma* or actions. I could have worshipped you when I was there, Oh Lord, but I could not remember you because I was preoccupied with all the pain that I was going through. I was being tortured by the heat and the filth of that miserable place as I was growing. *Jāṭharo jātavedāḥ*, the stomach fire was scorching me all the time. The scriptures say that when the *jīva* is in the womb of the mother he is crying and praying to the Lord to release him from that prison, that hell. At that time, he promises that he will never forget to worship the Lord. "The only thing I could think of when I was in the womb of my mother was when I would be released from that. I did not think of you then, or even after I was born. Therefore, *kṣantavyo me'parādhaḥ*."

बाल्ये दुःखातिरेको मललुलितवपुः स्तन्यपाने पिपासा

नो शक्तश्चेन्द्रियेभ्यो भवगुणजनिताः जन्तवो मां तुदन्ति ।

नानारोगादिदुःखाद्रुदनपरवशः शङ्करं न स्मरामि

क्षन्तव्यो मेऽपराधः शिव शिव शिव भो श्री महादेव शम्भो ॥

*bālye duḥkhātireko malalulitavapuḥ stanyapāne pipāsā, no śaktaścendriyebhyo bhavagunaṇajanitāḥ jantavo mām tudanti, nānārogādi-duḥkhādrudanaparavaśaḥ śaṅkaraṃ na smarāmi, kṣantavyo me'parādhaḥ śiva śiva śiva bho śrī mahādeva śambho.*

In childhood my suffering never came to an end. My body was covered with filth and I craved for my mother's bosom. Over my body and limbs, I had no control. I was pursued by troublesome flies and mosquitoes. Day and night I cried with the pain of many an ailment, forgetting Thee, Oh

Śaṅkara! Therefore, Oh Śiva! Oh Mahādeva! Oh Śambuḥ! Forgive me, I pray for my transgressions [Śivāparādhakṣamāpaṇa Stotram, 2].

When I was *bālah*, a small child, *duḥkhātirekaḥ*, I underwent all kinds of pain. *Stanyapāne pipāsā*, I suffered hunger and thirst. *No śaktaścendriyebhyo bhavaguṇajanitāḥ jantavo mām tudanti*, I was incapable, I could not move my hands and legs. *Nānārogādi-duḥkhādrudanaparavaśaḥ*, all kinds of *rogās* or diseases came to me one by one. *Rudanaparavaśaḥ*, it was a period of crying and weeping. I could not remember you, *śaṅkaram na smarāmi*, because I was suffering from some pain or the other.

Oh Lord, as a young child I was suffering pangs of hunger and thirst, and feeling the pain of being bothered by all kinds of insects and all kinds of diseases. It was a period of sorrow and therefore, I could not pray to you or even think of you. Please forgive me, *kṣantavyo me'parādhaḥ*.

प्रौढोऽहं यौवनस्थो विषयविषयैः पञ्चभिर्मर्मसन्धौ

दष्टो नष्टोऽविवेकः सुतधनयुवतिस्वादुसौख्ये निषण्णः ।

शैवीचिन्ताविहीनं मम हृदयमहो मानगर्वाधिरूढं

क्षन्तव्यो मेऽपराधः शिव शिव शिव भो श्री महादेव शम्भो ॥

*prauḍho'ham yauvanastho viṣaya-viṣadharaiḥ pañcabhir-marmasandhau, daṣṭo naṣṭo'vivekaḥ suta-dhana-yuvati-svādu-saukhye niṣaṇṇaḥ, śaivīcintāvihīnam mama hṛdayamaho mānagarvādhirūḍham kṣantavyo me'parādhaḥ śiva śiva śiva bho śrī mahādeva śambho.*

In youth, the venomous snakes of sound and sight, of taste, touch, and smell, fastened upon my vitals and slew my discrimination. I was engrossed in the pleasures of wealth and sons and a youthful wife. Alas! My heart, bereft of the thought of Śiva swelled with arrogance and pride. Therefore, Oh Śiva! Oh Mahādeva! Oh Śambuḥ! Forgive me, I pray for my transgressions [Śivāparādhakṣamāpaṇa Stotram, 3].

*Prauḍho'ham yauvanastho*, when I became a young man, *viṣaya-viṣadharaiḥ pañcabhir-marmasandhau daṣṭo*, all the various objects of this world and these five sense objects became like poisonous snakes and kept on stinging me. As a young man I experienced the various objects of the world through my sense organs. They would enter through my five-fold organs of perception, and attack my mind. Just as when a snake stings we lose consciousness, so also, when the attraction of these objects stung my mind, *naṣṭo'vivekaḥ*, my *viveka* or sense of

discrimination was lost. I lost control over myself. How could I help it? It is you who have created this world of objects, as well this mind.

*Suta-dhana-yuvati-svādu-saukhye niṣaṅṅaḥ.* I could only think of my *suta*, son or child, *dhana*, wealth, *yuvati*, woman, *svādu*, all kinds of taste, and *saukhyam*, all kinds of comforts. *Mama hṛdayamaho mānagarvādhirūḍham*, my heart was filled with *māna* and *garvā*, pride, honor, and arrogance. Therefore, Oh, Lord, *śaivościntāvihīnam*, I had no time to think of you. My youth was wasted in this manner, and therefore, please forgive me, *kṣantavyo me'parādhah.*

वार्धक्ये चेन्द्रियाणां विगतगतिमतिश्चाधिदैवादितापैः

पापै रोगैर्वियोगैस्त्वनवसितवपुः प्रौढहीनं च दीनम् ।

मिथ्यामोहाभिलाषैर्भ्रमति मम मनो धूर्जटेर्ध्यानशून्यं

क्षन्तव्यो मेऽपराधः शिव शिव शिव भो श्री महा देव शम्भो ॥

*vārdhakyē cendriyāṅām vigata-gatimatiścādhidaivoāditāpaiḥ pāpai rogair-viyogaistvanavasitavapuḥ prauḍhahīnam ca dīnam, mithyāmohābhilāṣair-bhramati mama mano dhūrjateṛdhyāna-śūnyam kṣantavyo me'parādhah śiva śiva śiva bho śrī mahādeva śambho.*

Now in old age, my senses have lost the power of proper judging and acting. My body, though still not wholly bereft of life, is weak and senile from many afflictions, from sins and illnesses and bereavements. But even now my mind, instead of meditating on Śiva, runs after vain desires and hollow delusions. Therefore, Oh Śiva! Oh Mahādeva! Oh Śambuḥ! Forgive me, I pray for my transgressions [Śivāparādhakṣamāpaṇa Stotram, 4].

*Vārdhakyē cendriyāṅām.* *Vārdhakyē*, when I became old, my body and my sense organs also grew weak. In my younger years, my mind was so powerful that it was not in my control. In my old age, my mind became so old and weak that I found that I could not make it do what I wished to do. I was suffering because of all my past misdeeds. There was only a sense of regret, a sense of hurt and guilt for all the wrongs I had committed, and the wrongs that were done to me. I could not think of anything else. There was *viyoga*, I was separated from my friends and others because I had grown old, and I was worried at what would happen to me and who would take care of me. Thus all the time, my mind was occupied with thinking and worrying, and filled with anxieties. Therefore, Oh, Lord, I could not worship you or think of you even in my old age. Please

forgive me, *kṣantaavyo me'parādhaḥ*. In this manner, Śrī Śaṅkarācārya seeks the forgiveness of Lord in the Śivāparādhakṣamāpaṇa Stotram.

### **We do not have the inner leisure for spiritual pursuits**

There is an account of how man spends his life in this verse as well. *Bālastāvatkriḍāsaktaḥ*, as long as he is a little boy, all he can think of is play. *Taruṇastāvattaruṇīsaktaḥ*, as a youth he is preoccupied with the sensuous pleasures. *Vṛddhastāvaccintāsaktaḥ*, once he grows old, he has nothing else but *cinta*, worries and anxieties. Therefore, *parame brahmaṇi ko'pi na saktaḥ*, no one is to be found here, who is attached or committed to Brahman.

This is a beautiful observation so that we may reflect upon our priorities in life. Unfortunately, at no time in our life, do we seem to have *viveka* or discrimination. It requires a certain leisure of mind to think about life. At no time do we seem to have that leisure. It is said that people in India are so preoccupied with fulfilling their basic needs and necessities, that they have no time to think about life. When they come to the US and their needs are more than satisfied, you would presume that they have lot of time here. On the contrary, it is people in India who seem to be able to manage their time better and attend to the requirements of a spiritual life also. People here in the US are not always able to do this. The mind is so tricky that it always finds some excuses. It always has some justification that there are more important things to do.

As Śrī Śaṅkarācārya says, everybody is constantly busy worshipping something or the other whether as a child, a youth, or an old man. Therefore, *bhajagovindam bhajagovindam govindam bhajamūḍhamate*. Lord Kṛṣṇa also says this in the Bhagavad Gītā:

वेदाहं समतीतानि वर्तमानानि चार्जुन ।

भविष्याणि च भूतानि मां तु वेद न कश्चन ॥

*vedāham samatītāni vartamānāni cārjuna,*

*bhaviṣyāṇi ca bhūtāni mām tu veda na kaścana.*

I know all things that have gone before, that exist now and will exist in the future, Arjuna. But no one at all knows Me [Bhagavadgītā, 7-26].

Though we have time for everything else in the world, we have no time or leisure for our own Self. We can never be with ourselves. *Parame brahmaṇi ko'pi na saktaḥ*, no one is attached to *parabrahma*, to the Self, to Govinda. We are

therefore told, *bhajaḡovindam bhajaḡovindam govindam bhajamūḡhamate*. Remember why you have come here. Do not be diverted from your goal like the people were, in the story of the king and his distracted subjects that we discussed earlier<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Transcribed and edited by Krishnakumar (KK) S. Davey and Jayshree Ramakrishnan.