

Mandukya Upanishad, Class 20

Greetings All,

Continuing his teaching, Swamiji said, I said in last class in Vaithatya Prakaranam, Gaudapada establishes Mithyatvam of world. It is not directly mentioned but indirectly revealed through Prapancha Upashamanam. This method is called Shruti Pramanam or Shrutyartharthi pramanam; which means obtaining knowledge indirectly from scriptures.

What is reality can't be negated. We can't say world is not existing as we experience it everyday. That which is experienced, yet is not reality, is called Mithya. The English word closest to Mithya probably is unreal. Gaudapada establishes this mithyatavam from Prapancha Upashamanam.

Mithyatvam's closest example is dream. It is experienced by all of us. In dream we see that it is very real, giving us pleasure and pain. Dream also has utility value when we are actually in a dream; despite all this we know dream is not real. So best example for mithya is swapna.

In first three shlokas of this chapter Gaudapada establishes swapna is mithya. That swapna is mithya is established through Yukti, Shruti and Anubhava pramanam's and he does so systematically.

He uses Vyapti for generalization thus he says where there is smoke there is fire. The statement, "a mountain is on fire as it has smoke" is analyzed as shown below ,using Gaudapada's logic:

1. Mountain is the paksha or locus about which I make an inference.
2. Mountain has fire; it is called sadhyam or conclusion.
3. Because there is smoke, the indicator, it is also known as Hetuhu or the reason.

4. Drishtantaha: means an example, as in a yagashala; because it is in a yagashala that you get Vyapti Gyanam or knowledge for inference.

This method of logic is now used to show Swapna is Mithya. Vyapti here means knowledge of co-existence of smoke and fire. Here Vyapti is a generalization. When we see an object in jagrat avastha as real, we observe that the object requires an area and volume (space) for existence, also known as Uchita Desha in Sanskrit. Not only volume of space, every object also needs duration (time) for its existence.

Einstein talked of four coordinates, the fourth one being time, indicated by date of origin and expiration. Every object requires a time.

Existence of events also requires duration of time. In Gita classes a question comes up. Swamiji, you teach the 700 verses of Gita in five years or 250 hours, describing the teaching in battlefield; how did Sri Krishna teach all 18 chapters in the duration of a battle? The basis for this question is because every event requires a specific duration of time and if specific duration of time is not convincing, you tend not to believe it.

Conversely if you find an object or event without enough space or time we conclude that object or event is not a real thing. Hence, some say Gita was an invention of Vyasa, as there is a time and space issue. **They don't accept the teaching as real due to a lack of time requirement.**

When you see a reflection of an elephant in a mirror, mirror has flat surface and an elephant can't stand on a flat mirror. You accept elephant in mirror as mithya or unreal reflection, knowing a real elephant can't stand on the flat surface of a mirror; **so the elephant reflection is an unreal one as there is not enough space for an elephant to exist on the mirror.** Thus, when sufficient space is not there, that event is

mithya.

Applying this logic Gaudapada says, dream world is also mithya as it lacks time and space for dream to exist as reality. Hence dream is unreal. This is the beginning of Vaithatya prakaranam.

Karika # 1:

सर्ववस्तुनिष्ठं सर्ववस्तुनामसंज्ञं भ्रमं प्रतिपद्यते
सर्ववस्तुनिष्ठं सर्ववस्तुनामसंज्ञं भ्रमं प्रतिपद्यते

The wise declare all objects of the dream as illusory, they all being located within the body and also because of their being in a confined space.

This shloka logically establishes swapna prapancha as mithya. First logic is lack of space; like elephant in a mirror. Dream objects and events are subjective things within our minds, not outside it; else others in the world would also see your dream.

Thus, swapna objects are subjective things in my mind. In dream we see elephants although it requires not an ordinary amount of space. We can't accommodate an elephant, but we see elephant, moon, stars etc in dream space. So wise people say all objects in our dream are mithya. A special all pervading space is created within my head. Why is it unreal? It is because all objects reside within myself. What is wrong with it? The space within me, within my head is limited or insufficient for a real elephant, or a mountain etc., to exist. Now in next shloka he talks of events that also are mithya as they occur in insufficient space.

Shloka # 2:

सर्ववस्तुनिष्ठं सर्ववस्तुनामसंज्ञं भ्रमं प्रतिपद्यते
सर्ववस्तुनिष्ठं सर्ववस्तुनामसंज्ञं भ्रमं प्रतिपद्यते

On account of the shortness of time, it is not possible for

the dreamer to go and see the dream objects. Nor does the dreamer when he wakes up, indeed find himself in all the places seen in the dream.

Yukti pramanam: (by joining together)

In previous shloka “things” were proved as unreal in dream. In this shloka “events” are shown as unreal in dream. Consider a dream trip to Mansarovar. You have to reach an airport, then fly and then trek to mansarovar; but duration of a dream-time is only about 8 hours during your sleep time. Within the span of a dream, during our sleep, we manage to see events such as our marriage, children and even grand children. They say an actual dream only lasts only for about a minute and a half. So, all events are unreal as there is not sufficient time. So, he really does not go to mansarovar. They are all unreal projections of our mind.

Keep in mind that we are accepting it all as unreal in our waking state; in dream state we will not accept our dream as unreal. People pray before going to bed so that they don't get bad dreams. Why this worry; because our dream experience is very real, during our dream. Vedanta says our waking state is also a mithya. Thus we get Yukti pramanam. Thus, mirror located elephant yukti pramanam is over.

Pratyaksha Pramanam:

(perception)

In second line of this shloka we get Pratyakhsa pramanam from our experiences. Suppose in dream we went to Kashi; we saw many cows there; and one cow pushes you and you wake up. If it was a real cow you should have woken up in Kashi, but reality is that you woke up in Chennai. From this it is clear we never went anywhere in dream. After waking from dream one does not experience that he is in dream place, hence dream places, dream travel, dream cows, are all, unreal. This is Prathyaksha Pramana.

Shloka # 3:

Shruti and shastra pramanam.

(convincing illustrations on the subject matter which is beyond senses/common cognition)

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Strictly conforming to reason and logic, Sruti also declares non-existence of the chariots and so on, perceived in his dream by the dreamer. Moreover, it is said by the seers that Sruti herself declares the illusory nature of dream experiences, and establishes the same through logic and reason.

Shruti Pramanam:

In Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, Ch 4., section 3, the waking, dream and sleep states are discussed. In swapna there is nothing. Everything is a mental projection. There are no vehicles, no roads, etc; we manage to project them in our mind. They are mithya even though we experience them. **“Experience does not prove reality” is the lesson of Upanishad.** Gaudapada shakes us even further with his declaration that, **“Whatever you experience is not real. There is only one reality, the “ Subject” alone is real.”**

This is knowledge of shruti. Therefore unreality is established logically and it is also asserted in Upanishad. The fact is swapna prapancha is mithya.

Shloka # 4:

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Different objects cognized in dream are illusory because they are being perceived to exist. For the same reason the objects

seen in the waking state are also to be considered as illusory. Just as in the waking state, so also in the dream, the nature of objects remains the same. The only difference is the limitation of space in case of dream objects, they being seen in the within.

With first three shlokas first topic that swpana Prapancha is mithya, is over. From shlokas 4 through 18, Gaudapada is going to give us a shocking revelation. Our normal thinking is that this world is real while dream world is unreal; this is your assumption, says Gaudapada. **He says, even the Jagrat prapancha is unreal.** This has to be very carefully understood and assimilated or it can cause confusion.

When we say dream is unreal, we say this after waking up, as a "Waker". So it is a Waker's point of view. However, in dream, from dreamer's point of view, dream is very real; as whatever happens in dream affects the dreamer. When a dog bites the dreamer, he will feel it and go to a dream doctor and take dream medicine and even pay in dream money. So, one has to think from an appropriate point of view.

Citing an example, a man drank too much at a pub and started seeing double. He asked owner how much he drank. Although he drank only one bottle, pub owner with an intention to cheat said you drank two bottles; and since he was seeing doubles anyway, he said you have to pay for two bottles at Rs 100 each. The drunk took out a hundred-rupee note and said it was Rs 200 for the two bottles; he was still seeing doubles.

Similarly, for dream body, dream world is very real. So also from waker's point of view this world is very real. **Once you wake up, the dream world is now mithya. Similarly, once you shift to Turiyam standpoint, jagrat avastha is also mithya.** Thus, Swapna prapancha is real for swapna shariram while Jagrat prapancha is real for sthula shariram. Both are in fact "unreal" in respective jagrat and Turiyam states.

Therefore wise people declare world is Mithya in jagrat avastha, as well. So jagrat prapancha is exactly like dream world. Is there any difference between two states? Between mithya jagrat prapancha and mithya swapna prapancha, Jagrat prapancha is outside of body while swapna prapancha is inside body. The common factor between both states is Mithyatvam.

I accept Swapna prapancha as mithya as it does not have time and space. But Jagrat prapancha has enough time and space; if so why is it Mithya?

Take Away:

“ Experience does not prove reality” is the lesson of Upanishad. Gaudapada shakes us even further with his declaration that, “ Whatever you experience is not real. There is only one reality, the “ Subject” alone is real.”

Once you wake up from dream, the dream world is now mithya. Similarly, once you shift to Turiyam standpoint, jagrat avastha is also mithya.

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy